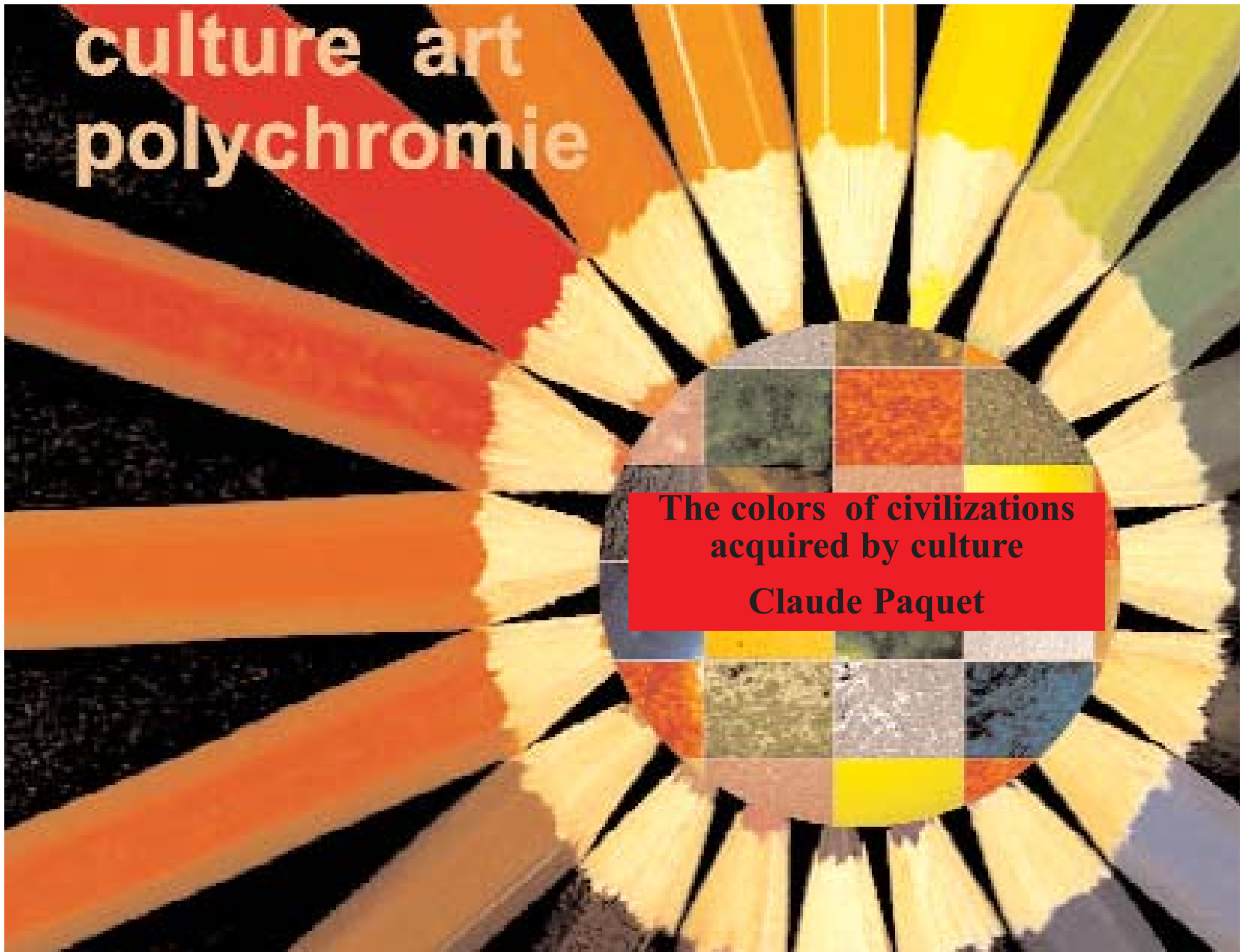


culture art
polychromie

**The colors of civilizations
acquired by culture
Claude Paquet**



The colors of civilizations acquired by culture.

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We owe our existence to our perception of colors. It is an integral part of the functions set in motion by evolution to guarantee our survival. Our field of vision has been between 400-800 nanometers for millions of years, since the era of our arboreal *Australopithecus* ancestors. Why do we see the specific colors to this field? Indeed some animals see infrared, beyond 800 nanometers, others ultraviolet, below 400, not us. Insects, mainly butterflies, recognize a wide range of colors while nocturnal animals including a large part of mammals and diurnal herbivores distinguish a restricted range. Only primates and hominids are exceptions, they are frugivorous and, like butterflies, must perceive a wide range of colors and shapes that correspond to the fruits they need to consume in order to live and those they must reject because dangerous or toxic to their health. We therefore perceive colors and shapes according to our strategy of exploiting natural resources which ensures our survival. In addition, we "color" the other animals and plants of creation according to their usefulness or not, whether or not they are dangerous, not to mention the use of brilliant adornments between animals of the same species for reproduction purposes. The colors perceived by hominids have a crucial meaning for their own existence : we perceive light intensities that we organize into useful signs for our survival. The colors are manifested through our organs of perception designed according to the needs of evolution. In all animals, the visible spectrum ranges from blue to red. The chlorophyll, which we see green, absorbs blue and red radiations. This means that the photosynthesis that forms the basis of all life on earth takes place in a window that exactly matches that of the visual possibilities of animals. Color is essentially an organized light that is only perceptible by organized beings. For the purposes of our study, we will call this period corresponding to the evolution of the fruit-eating *Australopithecus*, the rainbow era.

Modern colorimetry really began with the discoveries of Newton in the 17th century, which presented the first chromatic circle. He demonstrates that white light can decompose into multicolored rays and recompose again into white light. It was a revolution for the time: we discovered that colors were the constituent elements of white light and we now know how to classify colors on a hue criterion without subordinating them to a luminosity criterion. The notion of tint in the classification of colors is now becoming predominant and it will also influence the arts where all mixtures of paint are reconsidered and even taken to their extreme limits with later impressionist painters. The range of colors obtained by refraction through the prism is called the color spectrum or color spectrum. Initially Newton replaces in his chromatic circle the 5 colors of the rainbow by seven colors, for reasons more of an aesthetic and idealistic nature. He wanted to match the 7 colors with the 7 notes of the musical octave. The chromatic circle was also born out of a need for harmony in the representation of

colors. This idealistic and oriented inspiration remains nonetheless brilliant and will finally highlight all the possibilities of color mixtures. He doesn't seek to integrate carmine, magenta and purple colors, but prefers to glue the red and purple ends of the spectrum side by side. To justify this choice, he gives greater width to the red and purple sections.

In this evolution of the theories on the science of color, we must add that of Thomas Young who discovered around the 1800s, that the six colors of the spectrum can be reduced to three basic colors: blue-violet, green and red-orange, only tints necessary to recreate white light. These three fundamental colors are called the three primary light colors as we know them today. Several armies later, the discovery of the photoelectric phenomenon (the photon) unexplained by the wave theory calls everything into question. It will then take Einstein and quantum mechanics to combine the two theories and reconcile everyone. Einstein finally gave us a more complete definition of light, namely that "light is composed of particles of energy the photons which move in wave motion at the speed of 300,000 km / second in a vacuum and that each color of the spectrum corresponds at a precise and measurable wavelength.

According to Michel Pastoureau, historian specializing in colors and social codes, colors, their brilliance, their contrasts, their privileged supports form a historical geography which is a privileged access to the history of men living in society, to that of their more landmarks. or less conscious, to that of their efforts to agree or oppose. But Pastoureau's assertion "It is society that makes color" is incorrect, it is our brain that (innately) makes color. On the other hand, we believe rather that culture qualifies (acquired) a color, gives it a meaning other than that produced by our biological perception. The brain is never at rest, it constantly maintains a model of the world in which it is engaged ; this model is syntactic, in the sense that it governs the rules which associate the sensory elements received with the behavioral expressions emitted. Therefore, we could consider how, despite the poverty of the stimulus, visual perception can be so rich : what the retina provides us are only partial beginnings of a visual scene that the brain is able to complete with it. -even.

In short, color is above all a phenomenon of perception. It is defined as being a visual sensation corresponding to a precise spectral wavelength. Contrary to what we have always thought, colors are not an integral part of the objects or things that we encounter and manipulate every day. They are the direct effect of light on our senses in the small portion of electromagnetic waves that we call the visible spectrum. To understand color, you must know that it has no real existence. It only exists through light, that area of ??the electromagnetic spectrum capable of stimulating some of the photoreceptors in our retina. In order for light to generate a colorful visual sensation, a series of physiological processes must be triggered to allow information to be con-

ferences that exist between these two juxtaposed colors; he neglects what is common to them.

- This adjustment evokes chromatic adaptation, that ability of the visual system to adapt to the color of the ambient source almost instantly, or well enough that the viewer hardly notices any change to the objects in a scene. when the lighting changes. The domain of colors changes and is enriched according to the context. Certain environments, by their spatial arrangement or their temporal unfolding, give colors unexpected appearances or create illusions.

rose	jam	garlic	mauve	violet	lavender
crimson	ruby	hemlock	plum	magenta	lilac
brick	apple	orange	persimmon	orange	eggplant
coriander	berry	pink	iris	beetroot	mauve
candy	lipstick	red	orchid	umbrella	blue
coral	salmon	blue	slate	sky	navy
flamingo	teal	indigo	cobalt	steel	ocean
avocado	eggplant	purple	maroon	castles	lapis
chili	honeydew	mint	slate	sage	lavender
coral	hot pink	denim	admiral	apple	stardust
admiral	snow	green	charcoal	ginger	eye
egg shell	cotton	lime	fern	olive	avocado
lavender	coral	pink	rose	beetroot	coral
daisy	powder	mint	peach	mint	seaweed
pearl	ice	gold	gold	gold	crust
macaron	hazel wood	brown	wood	wood	pearl
egg	lavender	coral	beetroot	wood	pearl
apple	lavender	coral	beetroot	gingerbread	egg
pearl	hazel wood	chocolate	beetroot	umbrella	navy

Magenta is an “intuitive” color, a pure creation of our brain, master of illusion. The chemistry of colors, from the beginning of the 20th century, introduced new chromatic values ??to make hundreds of colors unusual in nature. To achieve this, the chemist plays with molecules vis-à-vis the light like the pianist on his keyboard. As previously suggested by Newton, the seven notes of the scale merge the seven colors of the rainbow. Subjected to the wavelength of light, the molecules resonate like the strings of the piano subjected to the length of a vibration, there are as many possibilities of colors and arrangement as there are possibilities of symphonies.

- Source : (1) Michel Imbert, *La vision today in La lumière, art et science*, Editions Odile Jacob, Paris, 2005, p.318-319
 (2) Zuppiroli / Bussac, *The Treaty of Colors*, Presses polytechniques et universitaire romandes, Lausanne, 2001, p. 94 and 150.
 (3) Varichon Anne, *Couleurs*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2000.
 (4) Françoise Viénot, *The Relativity of Colors*, <http://www.cnrs.fr/cw/dossiers/doschim/decouv/couleurs/>
 (5) <http://jc.sekinger.free.fr/contribution/controverse.php>
 (6) <http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/m121010/lumiere.html>

Let's move away from rational color science and focus on emotions and symbolism. The first Goethe distinguishes, in the section of the *Treatise on Colors* entitled *Physical-Psychic Effect of Color*, three possible interpretations of color: allegorical, symbolic and mystical:

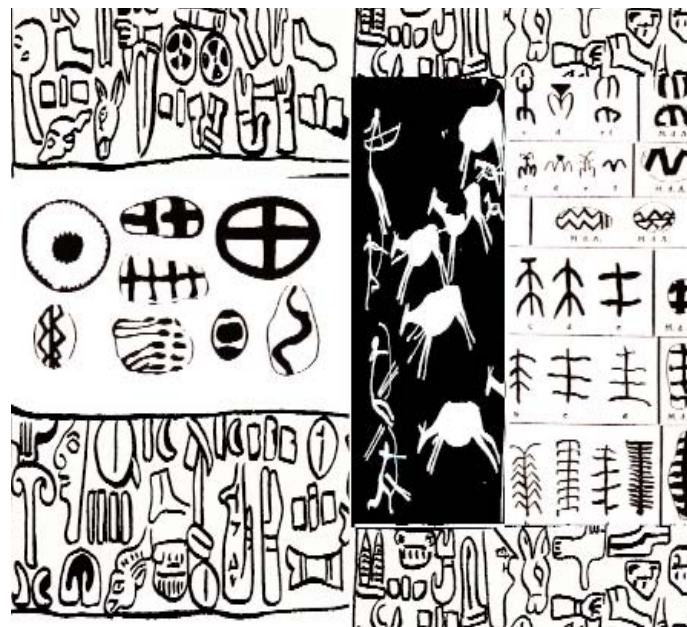
- allegorical: the color used for its conventional meaning; a concept, eg. "hope", attached to "green"
- symbolic: "a (...) use which would be perfectly in harmony with nature, the color being used according to its effect, and the true report immediately manifesting the meaning." * For example: magenta associated with majesty : the sensitive "magenta" phenomenon is directly related, natural, with the idea of majesty".
- mystical: "one can well sense that finally, the color authorizes a mystical interpretation. Because the diagram by which can be expressed the variety of the colors translates the primordial relations which exist as well in the human thought as in nature."

So we see that each era gives off a color like an aura. The symbolism of color changes from one culture to another but always forms part of the very human experience of a community as a representation of a civilization at a given time. In all cultures, colors revolve around symbolic considerations concerning clan emblems, later tribal which are reflected in the color of clothing and in the objects of primitive cults, the first of which was undoubtedly the use of the red ocher both as a funerary symbol, as a cosmetic color and as a pictorial pigment in the first cave paintings. The main responsible for this change was the birth of prehistoric art : color becomes cultural. It will be up to the painter Wladyslaw Strzemiński to undertake the study of these interactions and to identify an original concept. In this study, the painter analyzes the historical evolution of art in relation to the progression of the "visual achievements" of each society. These visual achievements are true symbioses of cultural customs and traditions, scientific knowledge, optical laws and perceptual intuitions, religious beliefs and even mythical illusions of a given society at a specific time. As Strzemiński specifies, "the conditions in which man lives oblige him to perceive a certain quantity of visual phenomena very specific to his environment, both intellectual and physical." Do colors have universal significance? No, answer the anthropologists, because each chromatic code has a meaning in the culture by which it was created and within which it operates.

The most common pigment on the surface of the globe is red iron oxide. Originally, before the appearance of plants, the terrestrial soil is red and forms a single continent : Pangea, called by paleontologists "the continent of old red sandstone". For our ancestors, the color red is the coagulated blood of Mother Earth. This pigment therefore embodies the blood of the primordial mother. Associated with femininity, the red of menstruation evokes the blood of fertility. Associated with men, it is a sign of the virility of the hunter who spills blood when hunting or fighting. In the Hebrew tradition, the first man is fashioned with red clay and is called Adamah, "made of red earth." Thus the war leaders or religious wore red either on the skin or on their clothes since red is the color par excellence. Didn't she give his name to the first man, Adam? (Anne Varichon. *Colors*, p.69 et seq)

Pigments from Prehistory.

Over 30,000 years ago, the caveman discovered he could draw lines with his fingers on soft clay. then he marveled at tracing his hand in negative by blowing powdered clay on the wall with the help of a reed or a hollow bone. The two colors which are clearly predominant are red and black. In the cave art of Neolithic caves, red ochre paints the surface delimited by the outline of the shapes drawn in black. (coal). Red comes from an iron oxide called hematite that is found naturally in soil. Black comes from charcoal or bone, mineral charcoal or manganese oxide. These pigments were mixed with a colorless material, the filler, to give a certain consistency, to facilitate spreading on the wall and to improve preservation. This filler was clay, talc or feldspars. A fat or water based binder was generally necessary to improve the quality of the mixture. These pigments were applied to the walls through the use of stencils, animal hair brushes, or only with the hand.



"Everything seems to indicate that the prehistoric visitors dipped their hands in a mass of red ochre existing on the floor of the entrance to the room and that they then touched the decorated wall in many places by pressing the fingertips on the figures and the concretions which surrounded them. Often also, they simply rubbed their painted hands



against the calcareous asperities where they left diffuse traces “(Lorblanchet, 1989).

These dyes symbolized blood and life with red while they had different hues for their body decoration, “to paint their bodies yellow, red, black or white. (Leroi-Gourhan, 1976). One can imagine that the colors had a magical function. These activities appear as vectors of communication and factors of integration which take place in the social or spiritual order. Body painting aims to create a physiognomy other than that provided on a daily basis by the natural features. The painting thus approaches the ritual mask of which it anticipates or prolongs the dehumanization and each color confers on the parts on which it is applied a particular value, determined by cultural options, linked to the chromatic choices (in general the white triad -rouge-noir), with patterns and their composition. Ritual activities using colored products in the funeral context are very numerous. The discoveries of Palaeolithic burials bear witness to this. Other highlights are provided to us in the ornate caves. Pieces of yellow ochre and tiny flint tools were found at the foot of black representations of bison and horses and a few red signs that were painted on the walls of the Salon Noir in the cave of Niaux (Ariège). These objects cannot be linked to artistic activities; they undoubtedly bear witness to rites possibly linked to body paintings.

A whole set of objects for working with coloring materials was discovered by archaeologists: nodules of more or less soft ochre resembling “make-up pencils”, grinders, pots, spatulas as well as “sticks” long. 8 to 11 cm and resembling large needles, tapered at one end, spatulate at the other, which may have been used for body paintings and tattoos.

The first Venus

During the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods, men have left numerous testimonies of naked female figures, half-naked engraved or carved in stone, bone or ivory adorned with ornaments, clothing, tattoos, scarifications and body paints. Certain female statuettes carved in ivory or in soapstone provide indications on the arts of the body. The shameless Venus discovered in Laugerie Basse (Dordogne), offers a glaring example of painting. It is possible to see a red band at the location of the breast and a less clear deposit on the sex. The well-defined appearance of the line testifies to the fact that this is indeed an intentional and meaningful painting. This type of decoration is found in other cases, in particular for the statuettes of Grimaldi and Brassempouy (Landes). Other representations of adornments or body paintings can be seen in the form of engraving. The fragment of a statuette known as the pear, discovered at Brassempouy, presents a series of parallel lines hollow on the torso. Multiple interpretations are possible because it can be hair, clothing, body paintings or scarifications. Identical observations can be made on other engravings,

where punctuations on the chest, stomach, legs, barbed signs on the top of the thigh sometimes complete the design of necklaces, bracelets on the wrists and ankles. The man with the zigzag discovered in Cro-Magnon or the character with the buttons of Bruniquel complete the range of marks which can signify paintings or tattoos.

Several archaic statuettes idealize maternal curves: the cult of the mother-father is very widespread and well established by sacred statuettes ... at home, at home. On the other hand, several others with voluminous breasts, vulva, hips and prominent buttocks represent, in many ways, the dark background of the sexual world and mark the man's obsession for feminine attributes to the point of distorting them enormously. . This deformity of the breasts and the vulva is all the more noticed as the facial features are absent from prehistoric Venus. Whether it is the Venus of Willendorf, the Venus of Lespugue, the Venus of Laussel and finally the Venus of Montpazier with the particularly developed vulva, we notice that the “face is a uniform surface, without eyes, without mouth and without ears ”; all the gaze is centered on the genitals and nothing else. These Venus are the erotic vestiges of young and discreet primitive sexuality.

“The Paleolithic characters of the human image are found in the other prehistoric arts of the planet and help us better understand the nature of the duplication of the human being that constitutes the human image. Human sexuality occupies an essential place in the birth of artistic creativity. The graphic or plastic female representation is treated differently from the male representation. (...) A particularity linked to the previous one is the frequent absence of head (face), arms and feet in female representations, sculpted or engraved, and that at all times of the Upper Paleolithic ”. (Jean-Pierre Mohen, Arts and Prehistory, Editions Pierre Terrail, Paris, 2002, p.186)

Red ochre also crosses Antiquity. The Mesopotamians, the ancient Egyptians liked to adorn their statues with bright colors. In Mesopotamia, the votive statues in terracotta and stone were, it seems, painted at the time of their realization. Red, black and white would have dominated. The Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians enriched their representations of the gods with color. Already in the 7th millennium BC, lines in these colors were drawn to emphasize the features of the face, breasts, vulva, jewelry, legs on figurines, female in most cases. And from the sixth millennium at the latest, the representations of women (most often) have eyes made from black stones or white shells. Persia was itself influenced by Mesopotamia, and very early on used red and black. The ritual modification of the external appearance of the body has in fact been known since ancient times and many texts relate customs involving physical deformations, in particular of the skull, irreversible mutilation (perforation of the ears, nose or the mouth, ...) or alloplastic transformations due to external objects and materials (such as clothing, ornaments) or temporary artifices such as makeup, hairstyle and the application of makeup.

Source : The pigments of prehistory, Philippe Walter,
http://www.cnrs.fr/cw/dossiers/doschim/decouv/couleurs/loupe_pigments2.html

Antiquity begins in Sumer

Ex Oriente lux! The light comes from the East. Art and the city developed along the Nile, Euphrates and Tigris. Merchants and diplomats made these advances known throughout the Mediterranean East, and were influenced by them until the classical period. No specialist of the ancient East doubts that the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians enriched their representations of the gods with color. Moreover, even a superficial examination is enough to reveal traces of color on many works. Red and black, in particular, are very common. Already in the 7th millennium BC, lines in these colors were drawn to emphasize the features of the face, breasts, vulva, jewelry, legs on figurines, female in most cases. And at the latest from the millennial life, the representations of women (most often) have eyes made from black stones or white shells. With the advent of the first kings, around 2800 BC, the reasons for making statues multiply.

The first European visitors to Persepolis brought back memories of austere ruins, imposing statues and bas-reliefs carved in bare stone. But these works were in fact covered with gold, Egyptian blue and bright colors, even garish ... In the biblical texts in Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek, only the word "sapphire" returns, the favorite stone of the peoples of the Bible. For the Persians the world rests on a sapphire which gives the sky its shine. So, obviously, adorned with so many benefits, blue stones have been a bargaining chip: the darker ones, deemed to be the most beneficial, are the most expensive.

Egypt between blue and green, between Nile and papyrus.

The Egyptians used a lot of colors to paint their fabrics, temples and sarcophagi. Egypt is indeed the land of color, although the present exterior appearance of the temples retains little memory of this time. "There is no such thing as pharaonic art without color". This period, which lasted from about 2620 to 2200 BC, is the last of the Old Kingdom, and corresponded, after Pepi I, to the reigns of Sahouré, Djedkaré, Izezi and Ohnos.

Egypt lived there one of the most beautiful periods of its history, at least as a civilization: indeed, it was then that the medical papyrus of Edwin Smith was written, that the great texts of the Pyramids engraved in the temples and the accesses to the tombs, which were built the great mastabas of Saqqara, which we discover in the shade of the pyramids of Cheops, Kephren and Menkaure. The archaeologists have shown that the sculpture workshops were present there, and that there were many craftsmen, participating together in the realization of

works of art: sculptors, polishers, painters, gold miners, jewelers, jewelers, craftsmen of precious stones. . We have been able to speak of a real Memphite school of sculpture.

"Neither the monuments nor the small objects of ancient Egypt can exist without color, the bearer of a life drive aspiring to immortality." (Sylvie Colinart, Elisabeth Delange, Sandrine Pages-Camagna in "Colors and pigments of paintings from ancient Egypt" Revue Techné n° 4-1996, p.29).

But the production of color requires knowledge sometimes considered occult on the properties of stones, plants, area of ??knowledge that gave birth to this pre-science called alchemy, the sacred art. It was a universal tradition among alchemists that science had been founded by the Egyptian god Hermes: hence the name of hermetic art, used until modern times. It is certain that there existed in Egypt a whole body of very ancient practical knowledge, relating to the industry of metals, alloys, glasses and enamels, as well as to the manufacture of medicaments; knowledge which served as a support for the first works of the alchemists. Then the intermediate sciences flourished, if it is permitted to speak thus: astrology, alchemy, the old medicine of the virtues of stones and talismans, sciences which today seem to us chimerical and charlatan. Their appearance, however, marked immense progress at a certain day and made an epoch in the history of the human mind. They were a necessary transition between the old state of minds, given over to magic and theurgic practices, and the current spirit of modern science.

Egyptian painters were inspired by their surroundings, they sought to reproduce and copy nature as it really was. The palette of the Egyptian painter consisted mainly of mineral pigments, generally available on Egyptian territory. Each color was charged with a strong symbolism, and more particularly blue and green. From a naturalistic use, they represented the sky, water and vegetation. But blue was associated with divine nature and green with the resurrection, freshness and youth, which explains the important use that was made of it, especially for the skin tones of certain deities. In the eyes of the Egyptians, the turquoise shade suggests both the image of motherhood and the viridity of plants.

At the beginning of the Pharaonic era, the Egyptians were already making a blue pigment, the very first pigment to be synthesized. One of the earliest uses of this pigment is contemporary with the Pyramids of Giza (Fourth Dynasty, 2613-2494 BC). The stelae, papyrus, sarcophagi and monumental decorations of the temples were adorned with the famous "Egyptian blue". It was still used in the 7th century AD, on frescoes, because it was the blue pigment of all Mediterranean Antiquity. Let us now specify that in Egypt, ocher red is the color of Seth and of that which is cursed and harmful. The scribes wrote the ominous notes in red.



The manufacture of the first synthesized pigment, the blue pigment, dates back to the 3rd millennium BC. This blue pigment, found in the 19th century on the frescoes of Pompeii, is still visible on Egyptian monuments and works of art by Antiquity preserved to this day: Greek amphorae, Gallo-Roman frescoes, Egyptian paintings on wood. Its Egyptian name “khesbedjiry”, textually “manufactured lapis lazuli”, as well as its color make it a substitute for lapis, a mineral precious enough to be reserved for jewelry. The symbolic importance of lapis was thus transferred to Egyptian blue, its pigment substitute. It is arguably the first man-made synthetic dye, around 4,500 years ago. It is a double silicate of calcium and copper. Depending on the heating the intensity of the blues is variable, ranging from pale blue to the darkest blue. The pigment is then ground and was spread on the sarcophagi or the walls. The intensity of the grinding will result in different tones of blue, and Egyptian artists understood and used it well. They sometimes played with the different sizes of the grinding particles, to give different looks. Blue is divine breath and therefore decorates the hairstyle of those who have gone into Eternity. These decorations are common in tombs and are still vibrant today.

In Pharaonic Egypt: the hieroglyphs of Denderah show sacred fabrics in green, purple and blue; splendid blue-green and Egyptian blue objects bring good luck to the afterlife and dominate art. Turquoise is dedicated to the mother goddess Hathor, chosen of the gods and protects from the evil eye. The breastplate of the God Horus, of a powerful blue, symbolizes the eye which sees all, the eye which heals “like the sun which reappears every morning”. the blue of the finely ground gems protects the eyes from the sun. Also called “anil”, indigo gave its name to the Nile, “the blue river” of Egypt, just that!

A “green” pigment was also synthesized for a few centuries, but its use was limited to Egypt. The shade of this material is more turquoise than green. Due to the similarity of their hues, especially on dirty and lacunar paintings, these two pigments have long been confused, although Egyptian artists used them symbolically for different purposes. The color green is associated with vegetation, with reborn life, and therefore with rebirth. A face painted in green announces the resurrection. The only green color of amulets is enough to protect the wearer.

This name of “Egyptian green” is due to its use for plant motifs, such as the leaves and stems decorating objects and by association with Egyptian blue. Indeed, Egyptian green was made like Egyptian blue, but by changing the proportions of the components. Thus they added the green of malachite (natural copper carbonate) which is a stone of a beautiful variegated green.

Source : A return to the origins of color, Sandrine Pagès-Camagna
http://www.cnrs.fr/cw/dossiers/doschim/decouv/couleurs/loupe_pigments3.html

The Greek miracle

Empedocles of Agrigento (490-435 BC) was the first Greek philosopher to write texts on color. For this philosopher, poet and doctor, everything was related to the four fundamental elements, fire, water, air and earth. The great unknown at the time was whether vision was an active phenomenon, the eyes casting rays of vision, or if it was a more passive phenomenon, the eyes receiving images from the outside world. He tried to adopt both theories simultaneously, considering the eye as a receiver but also as a lantern that would broadcast waves. In connection with the four elements, he described four basic colors, black, white, red and yellow. Plato later adhered to the idea of ??Empedocles. For him, light was metaphysical. He called the sun “the son of God” and he regarded the eyes as allies of the sun.

Perfect and naked as a stone! This is the image that the Ancient Greeks left us with the ideals of their time. What better way to render the pure beauty of the body than the whiteness of marble, a noble material par excellence? Was Antiquity really noble and austere, like its marbles? Recent archaeological discoveries reveal to us that the artists of Antiquity often covered the marble with colors, using a rich polychromy, even garish, to bring out the clothes as refined as colorful, and not very austere, of their characters. The belief, which prevailed until the mid-Victorian era, that Greek sculpture was left in its chalk whiteness rather than being colored, is probably the most famous example of a misconception in classical art. ; it is the fruit of an erroneous aesthetic view : the supposed “purity” of white. In fact, Athenians often dressed in multi-colored, luxurious and sophisticated clothing. Greco-Roman Antiquity notably claimed the religious, political and anthropological value of the harmonious combination of colors (poikilia harmonia). Egyptian alchemical art was decidedly



Fresque de Taurokathapsia - Crocodopolis - 1500 av. J.-C. - Musée Archéologique d'Héraklion

practical. Egyptian blue has been found on murals, dating from 2100 BC, in Knossos, Crete, on buildings from the Mycenaean period of ancient Greece around 1400 BC, and on paintings objects of the height and decline of Greek civilization. Theophrastus says that an artificial blue pigment was imported from Egypt, suggesting that the Greeks did not know how - or did not care - to make it. The Etruscans used Egyptian blue in the 6th century BC, like the Romans who succeeded them. It is not only found on the walls of Pompeii but also, not yet used, in the city's color merchants, as well as in the tombs of Roman painters. But ancient Greek philosophers were more comfortable with theory than with practice, and classical Greek chemistry was relatively sterile, with most of the practical knowledge of the Greeks being imported from the East and practiced by artisans of secondary social position. What other reason than the rejection of experimentation can we give curious ideas about the mixing of colors found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle that a craftsman would have dispelled in an instant?

However, this taste for bright colors was perceived by many as a sign of decadence from barbarian countries such as China, India, Arabia or Egypt, undermining the purity of the line and the Attic symmetry. Apelles, the most famous painter of ancient Greece (370 BC) used only four so-called pure fundamental colors since the mixtures of colors were not very widespread, almost non-existent. Because we have so few traces of Greek painting left, we are forced to make deductions about the ancient use of color from the writings, and especially those of Romans like Plutarch, Vitruvius and Pliny, who, unlike the classical Greeks, wrote about art for its intrinsic interest. There is strong reason to suppose that most, if not all of the pigments known to the Egyptians were also available to Greek painters. However, both Pliny and Cicero insist that four-color painting was a strong tradition in the 4th century BC, during the golden age of classical art. The tradition of limiting one's palette seems to have started when Empedocles redefined the notion of the four elements and Democritus made the hypothesis of atoms.

During the 5th century, Greek artists began to paint in three dimensions, using the chiaroscuro technique to paint depth. This development may have motivated the four-color technique, as a way to control colors, as artists worked in ways that managed light and shadow. When Renaissance artists rediscovered a wider palette, the challenge was to achieve the harmony of hues and tones, so that not one color would appear discordant with the others. By restricting the range of hues and, moreover, translating them into earth pigments of minor tones rather than bright, it became easier to master a three-dimensional world of light and shadow.

Source : (1) François Savatier, *The Forgotten Colors of Antiquity* http://www.pourlascience.fr/ewb_pages/f/fiche-article-les-couleurs-oubliees-de-l-antiquite-27238.php

(2) Philippe Jockey, *The Myth of White Greece, History of a Western Dream*, Paris: Belin, 2013. 208 p, <http://www.laviedesidees.fr/Quant-l-art-grec-perdit-ses.html>

Roman purple

Color of Fire and Blood, red is “considered a fundamental symbol of the principle of life with its strength, its brilliance, its power”. Being the attribute of Mars, god of war, it is a masculine color, therefore burning and violent. She is “overflowing with a fiery and restless life”.

This color is the last color of the rainbow, it behaves a bit like an ultimate door, keeping a mysterious threshold. In this sense, it is linked to the ultimate and to transcendence, which is why it has always been used to symbolize the world of death, of the spirit, of spirituality and of religion. The “blood of Chinese dragons and Indian elephants” was used as a pigment in the East long before it appeared in the West. Even the Egyptians may have ignored it, the proof is that it is rare in Greek art before the time of Theophrastus.



In ancient India Vishnu who represents divine love was dressed in purple. From the IIth millennium BC already Mesopotamians, Phoenicians, Babylonians used it to dye clothing nobles, kings, priests and judges. The Hebrews chose purplish purple as the liturgical color. For the Hebrews, purple is reserved for the worship of Yaweh. The most beautiful reds were expensive to produce, especially the sumptuous “purple” reserved for the elite, to the point that it was forbidden to dress in red or red decorations on pain of death, except to be a

Blood Prince. Long before, Cleopatra was represented wearing a sumptuous purple coat, a color obtained at the time by 10,000 seashells for 1 gram of chili! Pliny had no doubts about the virtues of the true purple attributed to the Phoenician city of Tiro: The Phoenicians ventured far from Crete around 1600 BC. According to a legend, their exodus was motivated by their love of dye, for which they used ammonia from stale urine; this nauseating activity had thrown the Phoenician dyers away from good society. In Athens, the dye shops were, for the same reason, relegated outside the city limits, although purple was revered.

The manufacture of the purple of Tiro was known in Asia Minor since the 15th century BC. The Greeks learned this art from their Phoenicians; garments dyed purple from Tiro are mentioned in Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid. The tincture was extracted from two varieties of seashells from the Mediterranean Sea, known in Latin as buccinum [Tais haemastroma] and purpura (Murex brandaris). According to Georges Field, the Greek legend is that the purple of Tiro was discovered by Hercules who, seeing his dog with his mouth smeared with red, attributed it to the shell he had just eaten. Others say that the dog's master was the Phoenician god Melkart.

The dyes are found in a gland called a "flower" located near the head of the mollusk and which contains a clear liquid that was extracted either by breaking the shell or crushing it in a press. In the sun and in the air, the liquid of a whitish color transformed into a pale yellow, green, blue and finally purple. It is difficult to imagine that the alchemical significance of this colored series did not elicit more than 'interest.

The Roman and Byzantine Empires wore purple to its height. In Rome, the emperors declared the purple color official and reserved the exclusive port as a mark of the political power prerogatives of the Caesars. (Anne Varichon. Colors, p.109 and ss)

Dazzled by the purple, rare and precious, the Romans associated scarlet tones with pageantry and solemnity. We therefore find this symbolism in the choice of imperial fabrics but also, until the 19th century, in the custom of getting married in the most precious dress, therefore red. The fascination remains intact with the arrival of Christianity which makes it its favorite liturgical color, with reference to the blood shed by Christ the Savior.

Pliny (1st century) tells us about it in his "Natural History". This color is so precious that it is declared "Color Officialis" and that it corresponds then to the power. In the Roman Republic, this glorious color was reserved for persons of the highest rank. A robe of purple and gold could only be worn by generals during their triumph, while generals in the field were entitled to a robe entirely of purple. Senators, consuls, and praetors wore togas with broad bands of purple

at the edges, and knights and those of equivalent rank, narrower bands. But, in Imperial Rome, the rules were stricter: around the 4th century AD, only the emperor could wear "true purple," and heavy fines were imposed on anyone who possessed clothing colored with this dye. "Royal", and even cheaper imitations. (The Stockholm papyrus contains three dye formulas imitating purple.] Under Valentine, Theodosius and Arcadius, the manufacture of the purple of Tiro outside the imperial dye factories was punishable by death. Emperor Nero ordered the death penalty and the confiscation of property for one who would wear or even purchase Imperial Purple. This royal symbolism gave value to the color even when it was not associated with the dye. Tesserae of inorganic purple were used for them. dresses of Justinian I in the sixth-century mosaics of the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna; those of Empress Theodora, in the same mosaic, are purple edged with gold. Heirs of the empire will bear the nickname of porphyrogetet (born in purple).

Promoted the official religion of the Roman Empire by Constantine in 313, the Catholic Church quickly adopted red and purple. Christ was often represented dressed in red like the priests; there remains the robe of the cardinals, the "capa magna". In practice, currently, cardinals simply wear a red belt outside of major ceremonies. Red, the color of fire and blood, is (for the Catholic Church) the color of the Spirit, "because of the flames of Pentecost". The Byzantine emperors were considered at the time to be representatives of God on earth, so it was natural to transfer the royal color to Christ himself: the mosaics of San Vitale show Jesus in a purple toga. The use of red, crimson and amaranth ultramarine for the robe of Christ in the most distant centuries derives its legitimacy from its connection with the Tyrian color. It is also the color of Byzantine icons, such as that of the Burning Bush which symbolizes both the presence of God (burns but is not consumed) and the fire of life; then it will be the blood of Jesus and that of the martyrs that floods all iconography for centuries.

The "Domus Aurea" (the golden house) was built by Emperor Nero after the fire in Rome in 64, in place of the Domus Transitoria. This immense Roman residence brought together many rooms with superbly colored paintings:

Pompeii, buried by Vesuvius on August 24, 79, is also famous for the red color of the walls of its homes. This Pompeian red gives a very attractive appearance to these homes. This blood red comes from cinnabar (mercury sulphide) which has been reduced to powder which will give the vermilion red. This cinnabar comes from the Almaden mine in Spain (province of Ciudad Real). It was then very expensive and was only used in high class homes. One can only admire the lightness and the beauty of their works, compositions in which each element resonates with the others; and one can only be surprised by their in-depth knowledge of pictorial means ... ".

Red becomes the object of all envy when the conquistadors discover in Mexico the existence of a small cochineal producing an intense carmine. This shade therefore remains rare and reserved for the elite until the diffusion in Europe, in the second half of the 18th century, of madder, originating in Persia. Seeds were then planted in Avignon in 1760 by Jean Alten, giving birth to one of the major activities of Vaucluse. Likewise, contemporary red, taking up the old codes (purple of the Emperors, scarlet mantle of kings, chiefs and dignitaries in particular in the army, the Church, the justice) is still the color of the prestige and merit given to personalities (red rosette of the Legion of Honor, red ribbon, red carpet of tributes paid to official and important figures), and, nowadays, to superior quality food products (red cord, red label, red ribbon).

Symbolically, the bright centrifugal red is diurnal, male, tonic, inciting to action ... dark red on the contrary nocturnal, female, secret and at the limit centripetal. One leads, encourages, provokes, it is the red of flags, signs, advertising posters ... The other alerts, restrains, encourages vigilance and to the limit, worries: it is the red of menstrual blood in women, warning signal for fertility dysfunction. Red is matrix: the Red Sea comes under this symbol, representing the womb where death and life are transmitted to each other. Man's semen, in Oksapmin's conceptions of bodily substances, makes the bones and hard parts of the fetus, while red blood and soft parts are made by the complementary supply of female substances: vaginal liquor. But if the vaginal liquor does not turn into the red blood of the fetus, it will coagulate into bad blood and turn into "failed" blood, in the menstrual blood of women whose men are careful not to come into contact with it because it is a highly polluting and dangerous substance.

Menstruating women are confined, during their period, in menstrual huts far from villages and men's homes. They cannot approach men, work in gardens, collect food, go to collect wild gallinaceous eggs or gather fruit from food plants in the forest. During their menstrual cycle the red blood which flows from their genitals is a poison because it did not develop into a fetus, it was not used to give life. It is a dead substance, therefore harmful to man and to the entire village community.

The woman must get rid of it in secret, and bury the straw on the floor of the hut which she used to collect her bodily fluids, in a place where even pigs could not find it. Because if these domestic animals eat this female substance by chance, they could poison by transmission the man who would eventually eat the meat. On the other hand in several other societies, the blood of women, symbol of feminine seduction and procreation, is that of life, happiness, youth, vitality.

Sometimes, certain codes cross time while being modernized. This is the case with red, a reference color in all civilizations, but a particularly ambiguous color: blood red, fire, life, ardor, courage, death,

anger, violence, alarm, danger, sin, prohibition and sanction... The prostitutes have for a long time had to wear red clothes to be noticed and especially not to confuse them with virtuous women; brothels were marked with a red lantern; even red-haired women were viewed as dangerous. It is always the color of seduction (glamorous red) and also the mark of impurity and the forbidden, of violence and dangerous passion ...

Red is still the color of the people, of social struggles, of the revolution, of communism (red flag)... In 1789 the French Constituent Assembly decreed that in the event of trouble, a red flag would be placed at the crossroads of the capital to prohibit regroupings; when the riot threatened in 1791, it was the mayor of Paris who had it hoisted to warn of the intervention of the public force, which it did that day; then, this red flag dyed with the blood of martyrs will become the symbol of the French revolution. Since then, such a flag signals a revolutionary context in opposition to the conservative blue of the gendarmerie and the police. ; the Communists appropriated it, calling themselves "Reds", and so on with the Red Brigades, Mao's Little Red Book.

It is the color of science, of esoteric knowledge. For alchemists, moreover, regeneration, the "red work", produces universal man. On the other hand, the color red is traditionally in modern China, that of happiness and success: "in companies, when the profits are shared, this ceremony is called fen hong (sharing red); someone appreciated by his boss will be called hong ren (a red person) ".

Source :

(1) Claude Maisonneuve, the color red

<http://www.almanart.com/la-couleur-rouge.html>

(2) A passion for purple: dyes and the industrialization of color
<http://savoir.fr/une-passion-pour-le-pourpre-les-teintures-et-l-industrialisation-de-la-couleur>

Racial colors

For several centuries man has tried to order nature and living beings by establishing categories, groups and orders. At first, the only anatomical differences were enough to compare two populations, which caused bats to be classified in the order of birds on the simple fact that both had organs to fly...! Applied to Homo sapiens, this method would mark the spirits for a long time! The color of the skin, in particular, is always a subject of conversation and sometimes of conflicts between different populations ... Evolution continuing its adaptation work will induce particular genetic mutations depending, among other things, on the environment, more specifically, climatic conditions. Regardless of the color of our skin, we all have melanocytes, which produce melanin (a natural pigment) under the control of our genes. Depending on its concentration, this pigment



darkens our skin more or less. At the same time, the quantity and intensity of the sun's rays influence our body which, to protect itself, produces more or less melanin: this is the phenomenon of tanning. All shades are represented ... People exposed to the sun continuously develop a "permanent tan"! If you set off on foot from a sub-tropical region to the north, you will encounter, as you go, populations that are increasingly clear, without breaking up ...

It is therefore gradually that this variation unfolds ... from dark brown to pinkish-white. It is then impossible for you to determine from what moment an individual is white, black or yellow because all the nuances are present and are linked!

From brown "chocolate" to white "aspirin", all homo sapiens have the same origin. It dates back to around 7 million years and is probably located in Africa (Toumaï).

Let us remember, the more life evolves, the more the living becomes diversified. It will be the same for the territory. We will speak of territoriality, of cultural territory linked to a specific group: Caucasian linked to the particular conditions of south-eastern Russia, Negroid south of the Sahara in Africa and Mongoloid in the steppes of Central Asia; Native Americans are related to the Mongoloid group at the beginning and will develop more and more specific characters. A whole panoply of totemic emblems, designs and bodily marks served for social identification as much of the members in particular as of the clan.

In general, tattooing, scarifications and other bodily modifications corresponded to the animist magico-religious thought accompanying the initiation rites and other commemorative ceremonies then, then, determined the social condition of the individual (chief, warrior, slave) and finally, this bodily aesthetics suggested a range of emotions ranging from sensuality to eroticism. The body marks are planetary and attested since the Neolithic period among the Celts, Eskimos, Egyptians, Japanese, Polynesians, Berbers, Bedouins, Arabs, Africans, Amerindians; rare are the peoples which are not marked.

The distinctive marks of a biological nature added to the cultural and psychological peculiarities which result from them form the races and the ethnic groups. Faced with this exponential demographic growth, the need quickly appeared to control these human beings and to regularize the dynamics and practices of community life. All kinds of collective constructions of individuals, clans, professions, classes, races and nations were thus formed, exponentially increasing the repertoire of distinctive signs.

The impurity of the woman polluted by menstrual blood will succeed "the smell, the color, the texture of the skin, the shape of the face, the tangling of the hair" like so many stains, tangible signs of suspicion

for the unacknowledged goal domination of one group by discriminating against the other and that should be kept in an inferior position. (Moscovici, *Domestic Men and Wild Men*, 1974)

Man appears to man as belonging to another animal species, dangerous that we must expel from the territory. Metamorphosis of the natural aggressiveness of protecting the territory for food purposes (innate) into a more complex psychic conception (acquired) of protection of cultural territory, of defense of racial identity between members of the same species but of different cultures. This emergence of culture into human consciousness marks the end of "pure nature" man and the beginnings of man / culture.

Driven from paradise, man will be punished for his "sin" by dividing the unity of men into threatening species to the point of committing the irreparable : the murder of his brother. Modern man has just been born, his name is Homo sapiens, the "wise" man and the Neanderthals will be the first victims. This struggle between brothers of the same species is the birth of war.

Some philosophers have advanced the hypothesis that war as a ritual is the only and true religion of man because it is created (a cultural heritage) contrary to aggressiveness (innate). If the instinctive aggressiveness of the hunter saved archaic human life, war has all the potential to destroy it. In fact, man is solely responsible for it and cannot find its legitimacy in the laws of nature. To take up Freud's idea, "man is the being in which nature comes into conflict with itself" and it is up to us to add that war marks the collapse of his freedom in anguish because before From now on, the abyss of a hostile universe opens up to him.

The old attempts to classify the human species based on cultural or anatomical practices unfortunately continue to feed racist theories today ... In the Bible the Hebrews already classified animals according to practical criteria: pure and unclean, edible or not ... In 1684 the French doctor François Bernier was the first to imagine that there were four races of men with a very simple and geographical method: each continent has its type of man.

In 1758 Carl Von Linné proposed in *Systema Natura* four varieties of Homo sapiens, giving them unscientific characteristics:

- the Americanus: red, angry and straight (red skin = ocher)
- Europeus: white, bloody and muscular
- Asiaticus: pale yellow, melancholy and rigid
- the Afer: black, phlegmatic and relaxed

He also distinguished two other fanciful varieties: monstrosus (hairy beings) and ferus (wild children).

Carl Von Linné was nevertheless one of the first to attempt to establish a species inventory. In 1775, the naturalist Johann Friedrich

Blumenbach proposed, based on Linnaeus, a new classification of *Homo sapiens*: *De generis humani varietate nativa*. In 1795, he definitively adopted the following taxonomy: the Caucasian variety with pale skin (Europe), the Mongolian variety (China and Japan), the Ethiopian variety with dark skin (Africa), the American variety and the Malay variety (Polynesians, Aborigines ...).

The great novelty of Blumenbach is that he establishes a hierarchy between varieties. He places the Caucasian variety at the origin of others according to a very personal criterion: it is the most beautiful people! The other varieties are a degeneration in relation to this original population (it must be taken into account that it uses the word degeneration in the sense "deviation from"). However, he indicates that all varieties of men correspond to one and the same species: he defends the principle of the unity of the human species.

All these attempts at classification will mark the ages and our way of seeing the world. We inherit them and they are part of our history. Some still use these theories (sometimes without knowing them!) For racist purposes. Science, genetics prove to us that *Homo sapiens* is a race in its own right, without any subcategory ... and we cannot make a classification on criteria as subjective as the color of the skin, the geography, the culture or the beauty of an individual! So the name Black Africa is an aberration.

In the general classification of living things, we speak of a species to group together all the interbreeding populations whose descendants can themselves reproduce. The notion of race is based on the notion of "genes common and exclusive to a group of individuals". François Lebas (Honorary Research Director of INRA) proposes the following definition: ... "within a species, a race is generally considered as a collection of individuals having in common a certain number of morphological and physiological characters which they perpetuate when they reproduce among themselves ..."

Human races?

No human population has exclusively its own genes. *Homo sapiens* are one and the same species. The anatomical differences that we perceive, for example between an Asian individual and a European, are only the more or less strong expression of common genes.

This genetic mix in the human species is so important that if you need an organ donation (a kidney for example) you are as likely to find a compatible donor in your neighborhood as in Dakar in Senegal. For André Langaney (former director of the Anthropology Laboratory of the Musée de l'Homme): "In fact, there is no genetic marker of the breed. We have never been able to isolate one which is present, for example, among all "Blacks" and absent among all "Whites." As soon as one begins to define a race, looking for classification

criteria, one never ends. Some have gone as far as 450! S 'we had to push the classification to its end, we would have to define one race per individual, because we are all different ". The designation of human races by colors is a matter of discrimination. Indeed, the Creator (who is not believed in God) created the human races so that in reality there is no absolute color. Let us never forget that the genetic diversity of humans ensured our survival, if all humans were the same color and strain we would not exist, our lineage would be extinct for millennia.

Source :

(1) André Silver Konan, Why so many skin colors?

<http://www.hominides.com/html/dossiers/race.php>

MIDDLE AGE - Gilding between barbarian blue and virginal blue

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the barbarian blue of the Germans and Celts dethroned the Roman purple.

We now know that in the Neolithic period, Afghan tribes exploited deposits of azurite and lapis lazuli, so it is normal that Afghan painters were the first to use blue as a pigment. Caravanners export the blue pigment to India as far as Tibet as well as to the Arab world. Antiquity, mainly Egyptian, is revealed in the azure blue of Egyptian frescoes. "In fact, the Egyptians were the first, around 2,500 years BC, to use blue in painting. The famous "Egyptian blue" is the first artificial color invented. This practice will subsequently invade the whole Arab-Persian world and will tingle by imitation the spirit of the Arab tribes who will adopt it as a color for Bedouin clothes and subsequently will raise it as an indispensable pigment of all the architectural art of mosques and manuscripts. The "Egyptian blue" was exported to Rome and was used by fresco painters to decorate beautiful palaces. Blue is the color of azure, of the sky, therefore of paradise. It symbolizes divine truth and wisdom. The gods come from this color: Osiris, Krishna, Vishnu, Buddha, Jupiter, Zeus and Yahweh hold their feet on the azure. This azure celestial veil hides "the other side, the divine unknown", it is the mantle which "covers and veils the divinity". Blue attracts man to infinity. It is a still, cold color, encouraging meditation and rest oriented towards God. For the Jews the blue city "is the abode of immortality. In Tibetan Buddhism blue is the color of transcendent wisdom and emptiness which opens the way to liberation. Blue is the color of Yang.

On the other hand, in the west of the Roman Empire, blue is despised because it is associated with Celtic and German barbarian enemies whose warriors painted their faces and bodies in blue, which gave them a ghostly appearance that terrified the Roman legions. . (Anne Varichon. Colors, p.129 et ss) We oppose the purple color of the Roman Empire (color officialis), the barbarian color (caeruleus color)

of the barbarians. This dark blue was taken from the woad, a plant (*isatis tinctoria*), the body of which was painted by the Bretons and Celts to appear formidable in combat, like “armies of specters” (Tacitus). This blue color was discredited throughout the Roman period and it was not until the end of the 12th century to see it adopted by the powerful. The words evoking blue are mainly of Arabic origin and not Latin or Greek, for example *azur* comes from the Arabic *lâza-ward*. Finally, these “barbaric colors” end up penetrating the Roman Empire ; the liturgical purple of the Hebrews found refuge in priestly vestments within the Catholic Church, purple became an attribute of Gothic royalty not to mention the “blue blood” of feudal nobility while polychromy made its appearance in mosaics and the stained glass windows.

Blue pastel is a coloring from a plant (*isatis tinctoria*) that has made the fortune of many people. But the pastel preparation cycle is very long, more than about two years and its preparation is complex. The leaves only contain a precursor to the dye.

It is at the bottom of a prison in Genoa that we find the Venetian Marco Polo, in 1298, who will tell of his extraordinary adventures on the borders of the known world. He thus constituted a famous work called the Book of Wonders. About a hundred manuscripts remain in all the Romance languages.

Marco Polo, tells us that the dye called Indigo that we received from India in the form of blue blocks and that we believed for a long time to come from a mineral element, comes from a plant. He tells what was the island of Hormuz where “the merchants come there from India with their ships, bring groceries of all kinds, precious stones, pearls and cloths of silk and gold and other different. colors, elephant teeth and many other goods “. In China, blue is adorned with the virtues of the medicinal plant “indigo”, its use in the manufacture of oiled papers with drawings, and in dyeing the famous “blue of China” used as well for popular clothes as the silks of mandarins. Tibetans seek turquoise at the bottom of lakes, protective treasures of waters and springs. Dyeing with indigo seems like a very old thing. Its presence is suspected on a Theban robe dated around 3000 BC; it is found on the edges of wraps of Egyptian mummies dating to 2400 BC and has been used in India since at least 2000 BC The Israelites used a blue dye that appears to be to have been a mixture of indigo and its bromine cousin, dibromo-indigo, in fact, Tyr’s purple. The Hebrew god ordered Moses that his people wear clothes with fringes whose thread is tinted with a pale color called *tekhelet*. This tincture was prepared from the rock snail *Trunculariopsis trunculus*.

In the Middle Ages, around the 12th century, under the influence of the Venetians, ultramarine blue (*oltramarino* - from beyond the seas) penetrated the West. The evolution of taste overcomes the Roman Empire’s disdain for blue and the game is won when the Virgin Mary

takes off her dark clothes (she was until then in dark, mourning the mourning of her martyred son) to put on a blue coat. First religious and Marian, it explodes in the Gothic stained glass windows. Color of the Virgin Mary, the color blue is rehabilitated and will represent the kingdom of God. It will be the heyday of indigo. The Middle Ages turned away from Roman purple, and the recipes for ancient purple were definitely lost. Quickly blue is found in all the arts. Valued by the Virgin, blue fabrics are requested by kings, then by aristocrats to finally secure all of society. At the end of the Middle Ages, blue dominated, it is the color of the West and now evokes royalty and nobility (blue blood), we will even speak of “indigomania” to designate the vogue of blue in decorative arts and fine arts. (Anne Varichon. *Colors*, p.144)

Then he entered politics: the family coat of arms of the Capets (*fleur-de-lys* on an azure background) became the emblem of the King of France around 1130. Blue became royal: it was the color of the legendary King Arthur. Royalty is of blue blood. The fall of Byzantium in 1453 symbolically marks the end of the Middle Ages and the end of purple. The blue of the night succeeds the gold of the sun in the azure, hence the coat of arms of the house of France: blue (celestial) with three *fleur-de-lis* gold (divine purity).

Between the 15th and 17th centuries, blue became a “moral” color. The sumptuary laws proliferate, which govern among other things the clothing, “the first support of signs in a society then in full transformation”. Blue takes advantage of this and becomes an “honest” color.

Finally, from the 18th to the 20th century, blue triumphed. The invention, around 1720, of color engraving prepared the reorganization of the system around the red / blue / yellow triad, future primary colors (p. 121). The blues are diversifying. On the material side, the war of two dye blues (European pastel against exotic indigo) can be read in state regulations and colonial struggles. Around 1710, a commercial fraud gave birth to a new pigment, Prussian blue (p. 133). Goethe (*Treaty of Colors*, 1810), reaffirms against Newton the strong anthropological dimension of color: “A color that no one looks at does not exist” (p. 138). And it is he also who, with the blue coat of Werther (1774), launches the romantic blue, that of the “little blue flower” of Novalis, color of melancholy and dreams which will end around 1870 in “blues” Anglo-American.

Source :

(1) Annie Geffroy, “Michel Pastoureaux, Bleu. History of a color ”, Words. Les langages du politique [Online], 70 | 2002, posted on May 07, 2008. URL: <http://mots.revues.org/9833>

(2) Claude Maisonneuve, the color blue
<http://www.almanart.com/la-couleur-bleue.html>

The gold of the Crusades

If we go to Eastern Europe and Turkey, values change. It is not only about the “Islamic green”, which is quite recent, but for example the taste of gold, rightly associated with Byzantine rituals. The Crusades, the Great Schism, the battle of Kosovo where the “Turks” seize the Balkans will perpetuate its use. In his letter to the Nanny, Columbus explains the meaning of his discovery of America. Thanks to the gold brought back, Jerusalem will be reconquered and the “Holy House” can be returned “to the Holy Church”. Because this period of chivalry had discovered the azure and gold which was associated with the Christian colors. These colors then correspond to the command and dignity of a high rank of the wearer. The gold walls of the basilicas dazzle visitors. Many icons decorate the interior, often brought from Constantinople with the booty of the Crusade.

Illuminators discovered four important colors: Ultramarine blue from lapis lazuli, orpiment yellow (arsenic sulphide), lead red and copper green (copper acetate). They work on parchment or vellum with watercolors, ox hair brushes or bird feathers. The colors (blue, red, yellow, green, in addition to black and white) of these manuscripts are frank and saturated. The quality of the pictorial layer and the care with which it has been deposited shows the degree of perfection of the production of the copy shop.

But the queen color, the one that dominates all iconography, whether

Muslim, Byzantine, Jewish or Christian, is the color gold as a symbol of sparkling faith. Gold comes from the earth (nuggets) but evokes the sun. He is a weapon of light, which explains the sacrificial golden knives and the golden sickle of the druids. Gold is the purest metal known since antiquity, therefore considered the most precious. It has the radiance of light and of the sun, therefore of God. In India we say

that it is mineral light, so we represent Buddha in gold, because it is the sign of enlightenment, absolute perfection, immortality. In the Middle Ages, alchemical research aimed at transmuting metals into gold. It was also believed in the value of gold as a cordial or strengthening. It is said that “Diane de Poitiers owed the maintenance of her youth and her beauty to a broth composed of drinkable gold which she used every morning”. The use of gold salts in therapy owed its popularity as much to its symbolism as to its results. The specific charge of gold in Chinese medicine acupuncture needles proceeds from the same concepts.

To combat the influence of Islam, Charlemagne created *scriptoria* in the monasteries, writing workshops where literate monks would develop Christian calligraphy just as dazzling as that revealed by Arabic writings. To distinguish themselves from the Muslim Koran, the monks will introduce pious

images in the form of illuminations to illustrate the biblical texts. Illuminators, artists of genius, sketched masterpieces using awls, quill pens, ink, compasses, rulers and square. Their work was distinguished by the execution of initials in gold leaf.

However, it must be remembered that the fabulous symbolism of gold-light crosses all eras and civilization. This “mineral light” (India) called “flesh of the Gods” (Egypt), associated with immortal-



ity and knowledge (China) will therefore be at the heart of the representation of God, Allah, Buddha without counting the Aztec gods and Incas of pre-Columbian America. In North America, the "corn peoples" painted their faces in yellow ocher, a symbol of the divinity of this plant. This ceremony just before the rainy season will make the land fruitful and the crops lush.

The glow of the golden letters in Vedic, Buddhist, Muslim, Hebrew, and Christian manuscripts reflect the illumination of the Supreme Word. The seductive power of the illuminated manuscript was quickly reclaimed by rulers, princes of the blood, great lords and other influential members of the royal courts. Luxury manuscripts experienced phenomenal growth. The art of the book aroused a certain enthusiasm in the new bourgeoisie of the medieval world. It was to whom, from the gentleman to the prosperous merchant, the palm of courteous elegance and good taste would go. The worldly manuscript, more watched than read, sumptuously decorated with coats of arms, heraldic emblems and mottos, became one of the essential attributes of power and fortune, in short, of those who complacently seek the reflection of their personality and values ??they embody.

The sun King

In 1661, Louis XIV became the Sun King. Because he chooses the Sun as his emblem. It is the star that gives life to everything, but it is also Apollo, the God of Peace and the Arts. We find in the castle many allusions to this god of Greek mythology because there are a lot of art objects in Versailles. The sun is also the symbol of order and regularity, it rises, sets without deviating from the rule. Louis XIV will in a way be the sun on the earth, allowing courtiers to attend all stages of his day. The king appeared dressed as the Sun at a court feast. In Versailles, Louis XIV did not hesitate to add the brilliance of gold and marbles. In - beyond the finish treatment of these materials demonstrates that taste for the most emphatic contrasts: gilded shot and

tin, painted brick red ocher with white joints, especially the window joinery, whose frank ocher yellow hue "origin.

Louis XIV was not very tall, about five feet tall, robust and broad shouldered, he impressed with his presence and elegance. They say he is handsome, his allure is majestic. Never tired, he seems to fear neither the rain nor the cold and is astonished that one can be sensitive to it. Louis XIV's "Grand Siècle" remains marked by the image

of an absolute King. Invested very young in his functions, educated by Cardinal Mazarin, the Sun King lays the foundations of absolutism.

This is why, in front of this outrageous luxury of the princes and the displayed materialism of the alchemists associated with the color gold, several mystical monks turned away from it and sought refuge in divine purity, the celestial whiteness of the transfiguring light. This transfiguration was revealed to us by the Renaissance sculpture brilliant milky marbles as the David of Michael Angelo then stained by black soot Carboniferous of the industrial revolution in the XIXth century.

South American gold.

Eldorado, the land of gold ! : the conquistadors had only this name in their mouths. When they discovered Peru, they thought they had finally found it. But the last Inca fled with its treasures. We never found his lost city. In the year of grace 1520, the Spaniards languish in Panama. Boredom and wetness. The conquest of Mexico left them unsatisfied. Of course, they have made the junction between two oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific, but they still want more and more, faithful to the motto that adorns the standard of Castile: "Plus Ultra" (always beyond). It was then that a rumor from the south began to circulate and spread in the young colony. Somewhere, in the great forest, at Lake Guatavita (near Bogotá, Colombia), the Chibcha Indians per-



form a ceremony every year that excites the imaginations and whets the appetites: covered in gold dust, the monarch immerses himself in the lake while his subjects throw treasures there to honor the Sun God. A legend was born, that of Eldorado (the golden man).

Among those who hear this story, a certain Francisco Pizarro, an officer in his forties and illiterate. He has nothing to lose and courage to spare. Finding the Eldorado will become his obsession. She will take him to Peru. Twelve years later and after two failures, at the head of 260 soldiers (200 infantry and 60 cavalry) landed on the Pacific coast, he crossed the Andes mountain range and presented himself to Cajamarca, in the north of the country. Facing the conquistadors, a human tide, the army of the Inca Atahualpa: 20,000 men, archers, lancers, slingers. Living God, Atahualpa then reigns over an empire of 4 million square kilometers and 15 million subjects. Untouchable and invincible, he wrongly thinks because he was defeated.

The prisoner Atahualpa quickly understands that his adversaries do not fight only to spread the word of the Merciful Redeemer (moreover, he has only contempt for this god who allowed himself to be crucified) and to increase the glory of His Most Catholic Majesty. , Charles Quint. He therefore makes a deal with Pizarro (contract registered before a notary!): Life saves against a ransom in gold and silver. As much as the 30 square meter room in which it is locked up can hold up to a man's height. For the Incas, gold (symbol of the sun) and silver (that of the moon) have a sacred value, not a market value. Emissaries are dispatched to the four corners of the Empire and, in a few months, they bring back five tons of gold and ten of silver. Part of the metal - one-fifth of the booty - is melted and then mounted in galleons which return to Spain.

The rest is shared between the conquistadors who, not knowing what to do with it, squander this sudden fortune in card games or the dice game. Valorous warriors, disastrous bankers. In any case, for them, there is no doubt: El Dorado exists and they intend to extract the maximum amount of wealth from it. Forgotten the golden man, here is the land of gold ... At the end of an iniquitous and sordid trial, which indignant (briefly) until Charles V, Atahualpa is finally condemned, then tied up. Pizarro replaced him with his brother Manco Capac II (sometimes called Manco Inca) and rushed towards the capital Cuzco, where he made his entry in November 1533. The spectacle lived up to his dreams. With its 100,000 inhabitants, it is a city with advanced urban planning (cobble streets and water supply), with impressive constructions, distributed around Coricancha, the temple of the Sun. An enclosure of 400 meters, several palaces covered with cornices and golden bands, of which we can see the bare remains in the current Santo Domingo convent. In the adjacent garden, the gold replica (and in real size) of each animal species of the Inca Empire, from the condor to the llama, as well as the plants that grow there. This vision unleashes a Dantesque plunder, according to the chronicler León-

Portilla: "Brawling, fighting among themselves, each trying to grab the lion's share, the soldiers still dressed in their chain mail trampled the jewels and the icons, flattened gold objects with hammers to reduce them to more transportable dimensions. They threw all the gold from the Temple into a large cauldron to make ingots: the plaques that covered the walls, the magnificent representations of trees, birds and other objects."

Faced with these excesses and those that followed, the docile Manco Capac II decides to rebel. In 1536, he assembled an army, which was defeated at Sacsayhuaman. He then collects everything that the conquistadors have not yet stolen. We are talking about 10,000 llamas loaded with gold in all its forms (5). A column which crosses the cordillera at the level of Vilcabamba and then sinks into the Amazon. There, he founded a city of refuge, a rear base for the anti-Spanish guerrillas. Baptized Vilcabamba (by the Spaniards) or Paititi (by the natives), this ultimate version of Eldorado has never been found. It is not for lack of being sought. Throughout the 16th century, explorers followed one another: Jiménez de Quesada, Francesco de Orellana, Sebastián de Belalcázar, the Englishman Walter Raleigh ... Feverish and deadly odysseys (of Quesada's 800 men at the start, there was none left more than 166 on return). Gold drives you crazy ! After the conquistadors, the gold diggers moved to the north of the continent. It was the gold rush that led thousands of individuals in a frantic race for wealth that was most often inaccessible, if not utopian. Then sprang from the earth the new Eldorado : black gold

Black gold

Oil is a product well known to man. From the earliest times, petroleum and its various natural derivatives were used by peoples such as the Babylonians: according to the Greek geographer Strabo (1st century BC and 1st century AD) the Babylonians used liquid asphalt as oil for burn for their lamp. Other Orientals like the Egyptians used asphalt to preserve their dead. It is even used in Rome where it is credited with miraculous therapeutic virtues: according to Pliny the Elder (1st century), it was supposed to cure rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, and even epilepsy! But the exploitation and use of petroleum as we know it will really begin during the 19th century.

It all began in 1859 in the now famous Titusville Valley in Pennsylvania. For the first time in history Colonel Edwin L. Drake, operator of an operating drilling tool, reaches an oil reservoir and manages to extract what will become black gold. The beginning of the exploitation of oil will literally shake up society in the 19th and then the 20th century. After this date, everything went very quickly: there was a real rush for black gold in all the United States of America (from Texas to California via Oklahoma). Production took off in the second half of the 19th century. It went from 67,000 tonnes in 1961 to nearly 4 million tonnes in 1884, then: • 10 million in 1890, • 21 mil-

lion in 1900, • 44 million in 1910, • more than 50 million in 1913.

All this is led by the powerful and unwavering Standard Oil Company created by D. Rockefeller in 1870 and which quickly owns 80% of the refining and 90% of the American oil transport. But Europe also has its own companies such as the English company Shell created in 1892 by Marcus Samuel or the Dutch company: the Royal Dutch.

But a question arises: why such an increase in production throughout this period? First of all, it should be remembered that this slice of our history has experienced significant industrial development which has even been called the industrial revolution. As a result, inventions followed one another during this period and the discovery of petroleum allowed major advances in the daily life of men of that time. For example, the kerosene lamp replaced candles and all other means of lighting. Then later, with the invention of the electric bulb by Thomas Edison and the growing development of electricity, petroleum becomes a resource capable of producing this form of energy. Then comes the turn of the invention around 1885-1886 by Daimler-Benz of the internal combustion engine which consumes gasoline and therefore oil. The development of the automobile market is joined by the beginning of aviation, which is also a major consumer of gasoline and kerosene. In addition, the appearance during the First World War of new mechanized weapons such as armored vehicles or military aviation further accentuates the consumption of oil in the world. Finally, the appearance of plastics and petrochemicals during the end of the first half of the twentieth century clearly shows that oil is becoming essential in the daily life of this century.

The strong growth of the oil market therefore accompanies the rise in the standard of living in industrialized and developed countries (PID) and which also follow the rhythm of history by going through and fueling two world wars. Finally, this new “black gold” is at the origin of new strategic and political challenges in producing countries such as the Middle East. Finally, let's not forget that oil is an unstable energy and that current reserves do not allow us to ensure a long period of use of this energy.

The color palette of painters

Painters who shone from the Middle Ages to the 17th century used only natural pigments for their paintings, and few of these colors held up to light. Most colors found in nature cannot stand light and fade. Some could still be used. Artistically red is used as the color of shock, fire, violence and evil spirit, but also as the divine color of a supernatural world of joy and redemption. The war scenes are obviously swept in blood red: in the paintings of revolutionary periods everything is red.

A red dye has long been known from the root of madder, which is a

herbaceous plant (*rubia tinctorum*) found in warm and temperate regions. Madder contains a fairly resistant dye derived from anthraquinone, alizarin. The roots had to be harvested, crushed and crushed to extract the coloring, it was said that madder was robbed. The cultivation of madder, a plant used to dye sheets red, had essential importance in the Middle Ages. In China and Japan, red is beneficial, giver of life; it keeps demons away, hence the doors of the enclosures of Shinto temples and the entrance doors of houses, as well as palanquins carrying the newlyweds. A red ribbon around the wrist brings good luck and protects against evil spirits. Around one paw it protects the cows of the sorcerer, the fox's hens ... Similarly for disease in the Middle Ages a red ribbon around the neck protected from the plague. In Wales the red flame protects against fever and rheumatism. The Zouave belt has the same explanation. In red heraldry “de gueule” relates first of all to ferocity and combat, to the courage that the color of the Legion of Honor, taking up the cross of Saint Louis, formalizes. But in Japan conscripts wear a red belt on the day of their departure as a symbol of their loyalty to the homeland.

We also used the kermes which is an insect located on oak trees which gives the scarlet red. Carmine from nopal mealybugs, dry-produced sepia, and Indian yellow from the urine of cows fed mango leaves were part of the usable palette.

Naturally colored earths produce ochres, shades of more or less dark yellows; the ocher sands are the best known and have made the wealth of Roussillon where they are still exploited. Derived from marine deposits, they are made up of a mixture of iron oxide, clay and quartz sand. The oxide contained in the ocher is naturally yellow (goethite) or red (hematite); but if you heat yellow ocher, it turns red. Used since the most ancient prehistory, painters all over the world have used them. The range of colors is very wide (from brown to very light yellow, including purple, red and orange); it is a material very resistant to light and stable in all mixtures.

The yellow came from plants such as broom, gaude or dyers' sarrette. This color is that of opprobrium and is imposed on Jews and Saracens by the ecclesiastical authorities. Venerated in China and long reserved for the Emperor, yellow retains an important place in Asia where it symbolizes wealth, power or wisdom. Among the Greeks and Romans it is also very popular and plays an important social and religious role. Then in the Middle Ages in the West, it is quite the opposite. In the painting of the 16th and 17th century the use of the superb pigment “Naples yellow” brought it up to date by Dutch artists because painters were looking for a bright yellow stable in the light. Everything changed in the middle of the 19th century when artists discovered the importance of light in the perception of colors; Goethe's treatise on colors (1810) revealed the face to face of color at the same time as scientific studies of primary and secondary colors developed. the romantic painters discover this dazzling (Turner, Caspar Friedrich)

then the impressionists, the expressionists, the wild animals, will translate the disappearance of the exactitude of the forms in favor of the optical renderings of the colors. Van Gogh in particular will give yellow its letters of nobility: in his correspondence with his brother Theo he will quote the "high yellow note" to which he will refer.

Under an apparent softness, the history of blue is very contrasted; revered everywhere except in the West where it was depreciated until the 12th century by religious dogma, it became popular in the 18th century by leaving symbolism to enter everyday language: "Cobalt blue dreams of happiness, sparkling water overseas, zinzolin of the water lilies ... Sky blue, navy, king, lagoon, forget-me-not, periwinkle, sapphire ... Prussian blue shadow on the wall, Delft the sun on the wall, cyan light of the gaze, indigo the infinity of the sky". Blue is a universal color. For the Persians the world rests on a sapphire which gives the sky its shine. Arizona and New Mexico search the hills in search of blue stones "which weld the earth, the sky and the sea": lapis lazuli, sapphires, turquoise ... associated with eternity, they bring to men the protective seal of the gods. The Navajo throw the turquoise, "piece of firmament", in a lake to make rain fall. Other tribes contemplate it after the new moon to attract good luck.

In the 17th century, religious paintings by the Catholic then Jansenist Philippe de Champaigne often included luminous blues, witnesses of the light of the sky; like the Belgian and Catholic Rubens, he shows a warm and strong color palette; while the Calvinist Rembrandt has a

more sober palette, with blues erased

Purple is the color of temperance. A mix of blue and red, it combines thoughtful action and lucidity, a balance between heaven and earth, meaning and spirit, passion and intelligence, love and wisdom. It is a

color of appeasement and as such the color of the robe of the bishops who must temper the passions of their flock. It is the color of the secret, it corresponds to involution: passage from life to death (as opposed to green which is evolution). It is the color of mourning and half-mourning. It is associated with the martyrs hence the purple robe of Christ during the Passion and the purple liturgical garments for burials.

Purple symbolizes knowledge, religion, magic or seriousness. The Tarot card called "Temperance" holds in its hands a blue vase and a red vase between which a colorless fluid is exchanged: the vital water, perpetual exchange between the chthonian red and the impulsive force of the celestial blue. Through the eternal play of the energies of matter, it

represents the eternal recommencement. In Greece the coat of Apollo was blue-purple. Among the Romans, purple symbolized unity, people and democracy.

Thus we join the Far East which attributes to purple a dynamic meaning: it is the color of the passage from Yang to Yin, from active to passive. "In tantric rites, the ritual couplings between yogis take place in a room lit with a purplish light because the violet light stimulates the sexual glands of the woman while the red activates those of the man".



To this is added a negative connotation of ambiguity, sadness, melancholy. The violet is a funeral flower: in antiquity Proserpina picked it when it was sent to hell. If in some campaigns it is evil, it is considered above all as a symbol of modesty. In Belgium it is even used as a love potion and its perfume gives the gift of divination.

Green pigments have long been scarce and it was ancient Rome that developed a range of greens from Green Earth. The origin of the word "green" is the Latin *viridis* derived from *virere*: to be green, similarly in Italian or Spanish "verde" also comes from *viridis*. Curious, it is also written "verd" in old French, it remains green, verdant, verdant ... By metonymy the male name "green" and the adjective "green" apply both to specific designations. Green hues are infinitely declined from the youngest (green shoots) to the most decomposed which turns gray; so many shades borrow their name from who wears it, such as sea green, spinach green, pistachio green, almond green, lime green, bottle green. Green is a cool color! Symbol of the rebirth of nature in spring, it is associated with hope and freedom. This notion of growth and justice explained in the Middle Ages the hat of the bishops, pastors who guided towards green pastures, but also the green hats of doctors and apothecaries because they used plants, and this color has remained that of pharmacists in the world. Army.

For Islam, green is salvation, hence the green flag because the mantle of the Prophet Muhammad was green. The green man or Khidr Khidr or al Khidir patron of travelers embodies divine providence. He found the source of life, found water and protected the sailors. In India it is called Khawadja Khidir and it is represented sitting on a fish and generating rivers. In the Muslim paradise the saints are dressed in green like the prophet for they are knowledge. In his treatise on the perfect man (*Insam-ul-Kâmil*) Jili attributes the color of emerald to the Land of Devotions, one of the seven limbo of the earth, inhabited by the Jins who believe in God. Green is therefore a manifestation of Love and divine Wisdom in creation, the origin of life, therefore beauty, youth, vigor, vital force. He identifies with the regeneration of nature and also with spiritual regeneration with the hope of immortality. In the Arthurian cycle, the Grail is a vase of emerald or the purest green crystal, because it contains the blood of God. For Christianity green represents the regeneration of the soul of Christ after his crucifixion. The cross and the instruments of passion were represented in green in the Middle Ages. In the Apocalypse, Saint John describes the vision of God: "what sits is like a vision of jasper and carnelian, a rainbow around the throne is like a vision of emerald". The vision of Saint John is probably the origin of the Grail.

This color, relatively ignored in the Western Middle Ages, will revive in the Renaissance with the appearance of a very successful work on the grounds, which will produce a palette of rich and subtle greens. Unstable, expensive to manufacture, dangerous to handle, the color green has only been used sparingly; the most stable, very pale, were

intended for the imprimatur. The Flemish "verdaccio" worked by the Van Eycks was an imprimatur made from green, ochre and black earth linked to the egg. Giotto (13-14th century) will use the same techniques, then Rubens in turn. In painting, green is a secondary color which is obtained by subtractive synthesis: mixture of blue and yellow or of black and yellow; this last mixture, very covering can be used by different techniques: oil, acrylic, tempera... but not for those looking for the transparency of watercolor or glaze. As long as the painters did not leave their studio to paint nature directly on the motif, they did not need to use abundantly the color green, so expensive and delicate. The question arose especially from the pre-impressionists, naturalists and British landscape painters. It is the observation of nature in spring, its renewal, which provides the color green with an unlimited range of tones.

But green was mainly used for its symbolic value. Sumptuous green expresses both the fidelity of the woman, and her original purity. Since the Middle Ages, green has been associated with the symbol of chance and luck because the color is unstable and you never knew if it would last or break down? The playmats, on the other hand, are always green to attract luck, which has resulted in a "green tongue", at the origin of the slang which corresponds to the jargon of the games. Green will long remain the emblem of the most unstable of goddesses: Fortune "Isn't the dollar green? Paradoxically, again, green also concerns illness (having a green complexion, sick), death (corpse color), or at least to be green with fear or jealousy, another type of disease! The proof: in the theater an actor will never wear green clothes on stage, since Molière died on stage in a green coat. (legend or truth?)

In Celtic mythology, the island of the blessed, Ireland, was the Green Erin. In Ireland, green is a very popular color due to the national symbol of the four leaf clover. In China, it corresponds to Tschen - shaking - which corresponds to the outpouring of nature in spring and also to wood, to hope, to strength, to longevity, and therefore to immortality. In India, the green primordial waters gave life and Vishnu, carrier of the world, is a turtle with a green face. The goddess of philosophical matter who is born from the sea of milk has a green body.

Green has long been an unloved color, perhaps simply because of its chemical instability: it keeps poorly, whether on clothing or on paints. It was therefore very quickly linked to the notion of chance and fate, favorable or not: feudal duels were organized on the meadow, before being reproduced in miniature from the 16th century on the playing mats of casinos. To make matters worse, the artificial processes used to obtain it are also dangerous, such as very corrosive verdigris. Everything therefore seems to have joined forces to make green the color of the devil, the one that actors will avoid at all costs, which gives emeralds a bad reputation or which allows evil spirits to be recognized.

It was not until the 19th century, with the Romantic Revolution, that green was finally revalued thanks to a new vision of nature : nature-philosophy. We no longer observe it by referring to the four traditional elements (earth, water, fire, air) but by focusing more closely on vegetation. By sliding, here is our green associated with pharmaceutical remedies, health and therefore cleanliness, then ecology.

The New Continent discovered by Christopher Columbus conceals many unknown colors such as logwood (black-purple), mulberry or annatto (orange-red). The cochineal will dethrone the kermes.

In the East, the ink necessary at the same time for the calligrapher, the painter and the stamper, played an important role in the development of the color black. We find “ink stones” in the treasures of ancient temples in China, based on soot as a pigment and glue as a binder; Chinese inks have qualities such that they still supplant Western inks today: they do not turn brown, do not degrade their support, do not dilute in water and their properties allow all shades, from black deep (jet), to the softest gray; also the subtle gradations of clouds and mists, the elegant lines of calligraphy, remain the great mark of Chinese artists.

Titian, in Venice, according to the beautiful formula of Hetzer “put the color back on the shoulders of Art” and inserted the Venetian purple in the frantic flight of perspectives. The “founder of European colors” uses in his painting elements from his Master, Giovanni Bellini, such as the orange setting on the horizon, representing the last memory of the gold of the mosaics of Saint Mark.

He will not forget either the heretical disciple of Bellini, Giorgione who set the scandalous example of the laying of colors on the canvas without prior drawing !! This process was condemned by the chronicler of the time, Vasari, in the name of disegno and the study of the antique, but he recognized that the painter reproduced “the freshness of living flesh”. Rubens constituted his own colorist range by copying the Italian masters. After having cut off his activities as the Infanta's diplomat (to “break the golden bonds of ambition”) he devoted himself entirely to his painting.

We will only mention Vermeer, whose approach excelled in the analysis of colored light. “Pure contemplation, it goes beyond any description of reality in a quest for a divine principle, the essence of Spinoza's *natura naturans*”. The invention, around 1720, of color engraving prepares the reorganization of the system around the red / blue / yellow triad, future primary colors

Delacroix was a great experimenter of colors and in his workshop he spent a lot of time “massaging with color, like the sculptor with earth, marble or stone”. His design of the Apollo ceiling had 28 primary colors, including eight different yellows. He notes in his diary of the nuances that he is the only one able to translate into painting: irides-

cent opal gray halftone, orange and emerald green, hot pink green, purple greenish orange reflections.

<http://www.almanart.com/la-couleur>

<http://www.kifkifimport.com/les-couleurs-et-les-cultures-une-histoire-qui-remonte-a-la-nuit-des-temps-2-2/>

Protestant black

Already present in prehistoric paintings, the black color appears in small quantities to trace the contours, shadows or drawings of caves, the rendering of which is not very stable and fragile: they were obtained by coal, smoke, grapevine, walnuts (currently walnut stain), charred bone or pulverized pebbles (graphite) available directly in nature. The word black comes, in the form “neir”, then “black”, from the Latin “niger” which designates shiny black; from the first writings he qualifies a very dark shade which does not reflect light; the distinction between shiny black (deemed to be beautiful) and matte black (more sinister, evoking death) was once very sharp.

The graphite, stable and precise, did not come until the 16th to the 19th century, used by the greatest artists such as Vinci or Dürer. Then it was graphite (from the Greek “graphein” which means to write), a natural variety of carbon, which replaced lead; graphite has the same ease and flexibility of use as lead pencil without being harmful; it can be used in pencil (flexible and crumbly, it must be contained) or in sculpted sticks (rounded or flat), and of course in powder like a pigment or a pastel; by mixing graphite with a gasoline (it does not dilute in water) we obtain a product which, depending on its consistency, allows a work which resembles in all respects that of ink, wash or of pencil by dry brushing. For a long time it was difficult to make a stable black, so paintings painted from carbon black or tar degrade; better results could be obtained with pigments made from calcined ivory, which give a magnificent black, but at an exorbitant price due to the rarity of ivory; this explains why until the Middle Ages one finds few large black surfaces in painting.

Black corresponds to the absence of light, therefore of colors. As far as history allows us, we find that black is also “the symbol of all that is bad and of all that is false”. Thus, black is associated with piracy, looting and smuggling creating a parallel black market. The expression “moonlighting” also comes to color the scheming and counterfeiting. The Romans marked with a black stone the “bad” days, but a black pearl brings good luck ... While in India, it restores balance and health and symbolizes the holiday for the Australian aborigines.

It is used in Antiquity by potters to play on contrasts, in the company of a luminous ocher or a deep red. While the Greeks see it as the symbol of the earth and therefore of fertility, Christianity makes it one of its favorite colors to evoke abstinence and penance. It is the time of

darkness threatening night, hell, black magic. Black is associated with Earth, Hell, the underground world, and naturally was the color of mourning from the 14th century in Western societies since with us the body returns to the earth: black is therefore present at funerals by opposition to Asians where death transforms into a “glorious body” which rises towards innocence and the immaculate, then mourning is worn in white.

Darkness corresponds to nothingness, to the black abyss. It is opposed to white as its counter-color. In the chromatic palette, depending on whether it is glossy or matt, it is the sum or the absence of colors, their synthesis or their negation. It is cold, corresponding to the primordial darkness. It is unstable below the world = the underworld is black. It is therefore associated with death, hence the mourning clothes - and with renouncing the vanity of the world, hence the black coats in Christian and Muslim religious costumes (imam ...), with Humanity and Respectability (magistrates, professors). From the austere reformers of the sixteenth century to our industrial bosses, it is not appropriate to be noticed by bright colors; it is fashionable for an honest citizen to remain discreet.

The color black of night is ambivalent in essence. There are two blacks: the airy, nocturnal, intermittent, relative black, reworked by the stars and the moon, and the subterranean, permanent, absolute black which can only be erased by artificial light. Our distant ancestors were confronted with these two components. The first abstract uses of black date back to the 12th century when it qualifies what is wicked, bad, evil and by association: night, fear, melancholy,



sadness, austerity, mourning, unhappiness, death ... “Black is black, there is no more hope”: the complete opposite of white!

In Indian symbolism it is the original purity: the immortal Krishna is black while the mortal Arjuna is white, it is the universal self opposed to the individual self. In all religions, it indicates death = the darkness of our origins, the darkness of the return to the matrix and nurturing earth. The Chinese associate it with feminine, earthly, instructive,

maternal Yin. Several mother goddesses are black: Diana of Ephesus, Isis, Hindu Kali. There are many black virgins illustrating the French Marian harvest. On the Palatine Hill, the Magna Mater was black as was the Ka’ba of Mecca. This is the original symbolism. It is both the beginning and the end. Among Muslim mystics the stages of the Sufis’ progression towards bliss are colored and culminate in brilliant black preceding supreme ecstasy or dazzling. In Islamic lands, the color black is that of the Kaaba in Mecca, the spiritual center of the Muslim world. In this immense black stone covered with a black veil (kiswa) is embedded a meteorite, also black. Tradition has it that the Kaaba was built by Adam in exile from heaven on earth. Destroyed by the flood, it would have been rebuilt by Abraham and his son Ishmael. For centuries pre-Islamic nomadic tribes traveled there to worship divine powers related to fertility and fecundity. (Anne Varichon. Colors, p.186)

It happens that in Europe “the East” is opposed to the Western rigor, inherited from the Reformation and the Council of Trent, when an

austere palette is set up dominated by blacks, grays, browns and whites making brightly colored contrasts of the dreamed Orient. For Protestant reformers (whose gaudy colors we have seen repulsion), red represents everything they hate: the immorality and color of papists! It was the Italian dyers at the end of the 14th century who, pushed by the Reformation which declared war on bright tones, made great progress in creating a range of black colors for fabrics; many techniques of creation of black paint find their origin there.

The beginnings of the Protestant reform therefore did not take place at the time when the churches of the West were most heavily colored. On the contrary, they are part of a phase of declining polychromy and more sober coloring. But this tendency is not general and for the reformers it is insufficient; it is necessary to bring out massively the color of the temple. Like Saint Bernard in the 12th century, Carlstadt, Melancton, Zwingli and Calvin (Luther's attitude seems more nuanced) denounce the color and the too richly painted sanctuaries. The color red, the color par excellence of the Bible, is that which symbolizes at the highest point luxury and sin. It no longer refers to the blood of Christ but to the folly of men. Carlstadt and Luther loathe yours. The latter sees it as the emblematic color of papist Rome, colored like the great prostitute of Babylon. For Protestants the colors considered "honest" or moral are white, black, gray and blue.

Calvin does not condemn the visual arts but they must be only secular and seek to educate, to rejoice and to honor God. Not by representing the creator (which is abominable) but the Creation. The artist must therefore flee from artificial, gratuitous subjects, inviting intrigue or lasciviousness. Art has no value in itself; it comes from God and should help to understand him better. At the same time, painters must work in moderation, seek the harmony of shapes and tones, take inspiration from the created and represent what it sees. For Calvin, the constructive elements of beauty are clarity, order and perfection. The most beautiful colors are those of nature; the tender green tones of certain plants have in his eyes "a lot of grace and the most beautiful color is naturally that of the sky.

Under the effect of the Reformation in the 16th century, which advocated dark and austere clothing as a sign of humility and modesty, the color black became the color of monks, priests, magistrates and public officers. Laws and decrees are multiplying to oblige the population to dress in black during a long period of mourning, decrees which made the fortune of textile manufacturers until the 19th century. In the 19th century, the beginning of the industrial era, with the black faces of coal mines, demonizes black and again, romanticism sets it up as the color of discomfort, of sadness. The expressions articulated around this color with a special status demonstrate how black transcribes our relationship to the world: black of darkness and night, of the devil, of hell, of evil, of death, of tragedy, of violence and danger; black of mood and ideas, of despair or melancholy, of pessimism, of

anger or of madness; black with revolt and anarchy, racism or fascism; but also black with mystery, secrecy, clandestinity, trouble or confusion, alchemy and the Black Work ...

Black today encompasses a wide range of meanings, social codes that have been put in place in the last century, in particular thanks to the fashion of dress which made pass the black of austerity, of mourning, of erasure. , from classicism, to elegant, luxurious, provocative or rebellious black. From "feminine" black, from the little dress created by Chanel in the 1920s, with discreet elegance, to that of Piaf or various black ladies (Rykiel, Barbara), from the pantsuit of the emancipated woman of Yves Saint Laurent, in rebellious and provocative black of youth, black jackets, rockers, punks, goths... Multisexual black of the black generation. This scrambling of codes has made black a contradictory and paradoxical color, shadow and light, tradition and modernity, classicism and provocation, which very negative in language and words (bête noire, grinding black), has been extremely valued until to become the backdrop for the twentieth century and our contemporary society.

Source :

- (1) The color black, Claude Maisonneuve, <http://www.almanart.com/la-couleur-noire.html>
- (2) Isabelle Grégor, A Story of All Colors http://www.herodote.net/Vie_quotidienne-synthese-454.php
- (3) Lorenzo Brutti, Symbolism of black, http://www.cnrs.fr/cw/dossiers/doschim/decouv/couleurs/loupe_symbolique.html
- (4) Color: light or material <http://www.cineclubdecaen.com/peinture/analyse/couleurhistoirede-lart.htm>

The Yellow Orient

If the European West is blue, the East is yellow. The origin of the word "yellow" is the Latin galbinus whose radical "gal" designates an Indo-European group which itself translates the Greek "khloros" (chlorine) and has supplanted the designations of yellow in Latin: flavus for the light yellow and fulvus for dark yellow, both equally brilliant. Remember that it is a fundamental color: one of the 3 primaries with red and blue, degraded to white or folded down to black; these colors are pure, no mixture can obtain them; together they constitute the totality of the possible combinations of known colors. Yellow mixed with red gives an infinite range of warm and bright tones, it discreetly fades mixed with white and becomes mustard mixed with black. Yellow exists naturally in plants, stones and soils, as well as in minerals. The yellow color is generally quite resistant to staining and painting. It is associated with power and wealth. obviously since it is the color of gold, of the sun, of wheat.

In China, yellow is the mythical emblem of the first emperor who brought about the unity of China to form the “middle empire”. Yellow is thus reserved for the emperor and princes of the blood. In India, yellow is the color of happiness, marriage and fertility. Buddhist monks must be covered with yellow fabrics dyed with saffron. Saffron is also associated with the sadhu, wise considered saints. For eastern monks and sadhu, yellow signifies renunciation of the terrestrial world. Orange comes from red and yellow and is therefore situated between temperance and reason. If the balance tends towards yellow, there is a revelation of divine love: Buddhist monks have adopted the saffron robe to represent the chakra in connection with creativity and dynamism.

The Egyptians believed in the cycles of life and death. More than elsewhere, solar yellow is the essential vehicle for the rebirth of souls, it is also the main color that adorns the funeral tombs of kings and notables of the different dynasties. This color is also used to signify joy or positive energy, in Japan it means courage and strength. In India, it is associated with commerce and negotiation. Its use extends to Africa, Polynesia and the Americas.

While in the East, it evokes the sun, light and heat and by extension life, energy, power, in the West, yellow instead conveys negative symbols.

which has been dispossessed of its positive part to become an extinct, dull, sad color... worse it has become a symbol of betrayal, deception, lie”. in medieval culture, the texts report that yellow is the color of traitors: the house of a counterfeiter is painted yellow and he is dressed in yellow to go to the stake. In many religious scenes, Judas is dressed in yellow, stigmatized by treason. It's the same in novels: traitors are described dressed in yellow, and yellow becomes the color

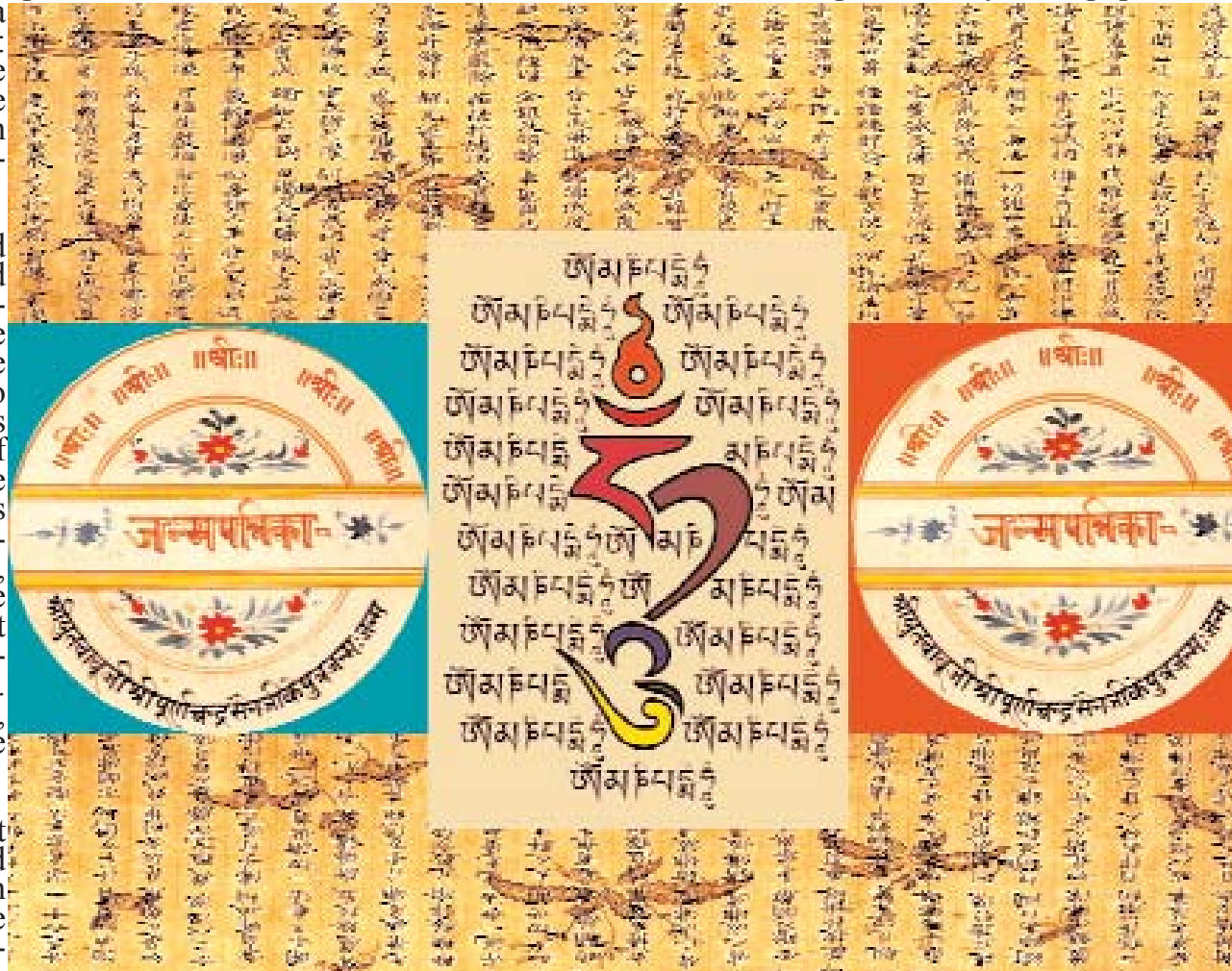
of liars, cheaters. It will eventually become the color of exclusion, transmitted to the Jews by Judas from the 13th century with a distinctive sign (rouelle or table of the law or eastern star) in the yellow-red range; the Nazis will only use medieval symbols. The strikebreakers, unions created in 1899 to collaborate with the bosses are reputed to betray their fellow workers and still called “the yellow ones” in memory of their emblem: a sprig of broom and a yellow acorn. As for the yellow passport, it was the one reserved for former convicts (1859) because it was printed on yellow paper. The pejorative use of yellow

as an adjective is perpetuated in a number of expressions: the yellow peril still designates a kind of racism towards Asian populations.

It is a warm color, often associated with air. But it dazzles and has the hardness of metal. It corresponds to wealth, to faith. It is the symbol of Youth and Strength. In practically all peoples gold was linked to wealth, therefore to nobility, to power. It is the color of God (we cannot look at the sun). Color of immortality, it is divine color, therefore that of the Emperor and kings as well in Europe as in China, India or Egypt.

In Egypt the golden yellow symbolized “the chariot of the Sun and its gods”; many burial chambers are painted yellow (and blue) to ensure the survival of

the soul. Among the Aztecs Huitzilopochtli, the god of the midday sun, is painted in yellow and blue. The blue of turquoises is among the Aztecs the stone that adorned the goddess of renewal and the stone that was placed in the place of the heart of a dead prince before cremation. In Persia Mithras is golden yellow like Apollo in Greece. In India yellow corresponds to the root center and the light element. It is the color of the robe of Buddhist monks. In China it is the color of the



Emperor who is at the center of the earth, as the sun is at the center of the sky. Yellow emerges from black like the night sun, the gold nugget of the earth. It ensures fertility. For this we adorn the bridal layer with sheets, pillows, silk veils and yellow gauzes. Everything must be yellow. In Greek mythology, the golden apples of the garden of the Hesperides are a symbol of love and harmony, but the Trojan War was started by a golden apple, apple of pride and jealousy. In China yellow springs lead to the realm of the dead. In the Beijing theater, the actors' yellow make-up signifies cruelty, concealment, cynicism.

It is one of the most ambivalent colors. If yellow corresponds to wealth, to glory in Asia, for Islam yellow is linked to betrayal and disappointment, hypocrisy, avarice, envy. Among Christians, yellow also signified treason: Judas is represented with a yellow robe as well as the Jews. This is why in 1215 the Lateran Council imposed a yellow ring on their clothing, ancestor of that sad yellow star of sinister memory. In 1269, Saint Louis, under the influence of the Church, forced the Jews, considered since the Crusades as allies of the Muslims, to wear a yellow wheel, as a sign of infamy. In the 16th century, the door of the traitors was painted yellow. The same method of distinction was used by the Nazi regime in the twentieth century with the wearing of the yellow star ... The French expression "yellow" designating the traitor dates back to the fifteenth century. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, yellow is linked to disorder, to madness: jesters and fools are dressed in yellow (the yellow dwarf). Yellow is associated with Lucifer, sulfur, and traitors. Paradoxically, it corresponds to the deceived husbands whereas originally it indicated the deceiver.

Yellow is therefore rare in the murals and does not succeed in imposing itself at the heart of the stained glass windows, although it does not pose a problem of realization and holding. The impressionists had to decide to put their easels outside so that the West could discover the luminosity of the bunches of sunflowers or the fields of wheat.

Orange (or saffron) is the sacred color in Hinduism. It represents the purifying fire of the body and the passions, synonymous with liberation. The orange chakra: Called the sacral chakra. It is located approximately 2 inches below the navel and is responsible for our creative and imaginative skills. It is also the point of connection between our physical body and the etheric body. Its element is Water and it shines a flaming orange. It is the chakra of sexual forces, fertility, fertility and our ability to create. It corresponds to the genitals. It acts on the principle of perpetual rebirth through purification. It pushes back the ego thanks to a communion by the sexual act in the sense of a process of unification. It contributes to the harmony of relationships between people and the feelings they convey as well as their spontaneity. It enriches social relationships, generates and maintains friendship.

Orange symbolizes the point of balance of the mind and the libido, halfway between red and yellow, therefore between reason and temperance. If the balance tends to break towards the yellow, there is a revelation of divine love. In Buddhist symbolism, the color orange links to creativity and dynamism. Buddhist monks drape themselves in orange colored clothing. It is to this conception that the saffron robe of the Buddhist monks and the orange cross of the knights of the Holy Spirit are attached. The veil of the bride and groom, the flammeum, is "the emblem of the perpetuity of marriage". The muses were dressed in saffron, like the veil of Helena.

Orange also symbolizes loyalty. But in its imbalance towards the red it indicates infidelity and lust. Dionysos was dressed in orange; "born of fire (Zeus), he was raised by rain" (Nymphs Hyades whom Zeus thanked by transforming them into stars which bring rain). His unbridled worship corresponds to the intoxication caused by wine or red or "white" - alder, as part of a ritual orgy, but with a view to divine research "since the soul is incorruptible and immortal". Orange signifies the union of man with God, "symbol of the mystical wedding feast",

In the Irish flag, the color orange symbolizes the Protestant religion, as opposed to the Catholic religion in green. White symbolizes peace between these two religions. Since the Georgian revolution, the color orange has symbolized political freedom. This symbol was also used in Ukraine, Israel and Lebanon. In the Netherlands, where the reigning family is that of the House of Orange-Nassau (Oranje-Nassau), this shade is, by comparison with the name of the family, the national color and its use is very frequent there.

In symbolism, in the West, orange is associated with energy. The origin of this symbolism lies in the fact that orange is the color of orange (energetic citrus). In the diet, the orange color is obviously associated with the orange fruit, but also with other fruits whose color, flesh or juice are orange: tangerine, clementine, mango, melon, apricot. Orange-colored sorbets are usually made with these orange fruits. It is also the color of carrot, so the orange color is often used to promote products containing vitamin A (beta-carotene) and vitamin C (of which orange fruits are rich). Even vitamin C tablets are often (artificially) colored orange and flavored with orange.

Source :

<http://www.creerlecalme.com/leschakras.html>

<http://savannah91.viabloga.com/news/les-chakras>

<http://www.creations-feng-shui.com/lire/therapies-naturelles-11/les-chakras-23.html>

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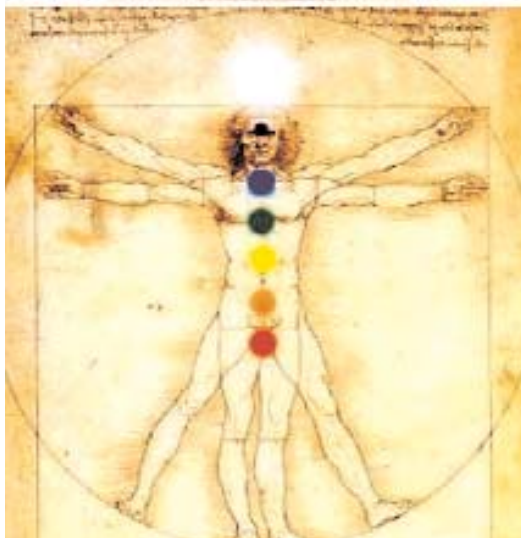
<http://www.eternelpresent.ch>

COLOR THERAPY

At all times, this therapeutic observation of color has been accepted : colors induce a process of self-healing. As much in Egypt, Persia,



China and India, practitioners have found that some colors, like warm colors, increase the energy flow and tone the tissues, other colors, like cool colors, slow this flow. . Neutral colors have the particularity of cleaning and draining energy while mixed colors are regenerative, nutritious, protective and healing. It is the organism itself which, awakened by the colored wave, will give itself the means to regulate the disorder by stimulating the deficient energy or, conversely, by calming the excess energy.



The chakras, in Sanskrit “Wheel of Energy or Spinning Wheel”, are the doors of entry of energy into our body. Our body contains 7 major energy centers. These chakras are located on the Channel of Light, located along the spine, which makes the connection between Earth (Mother-yin Energy) and Heaven (Father-Yang Energy). They work like pumps or valves that regulate the flow of energy through the energy system. The amount of energy

of the chakras is the same level as the degree of consciousness or evolution of the being. The more we evolve, the more our consciousness expands and the more our chakras open and allow energy to pass.

The disconnection of energy in these centers causes diseases of the physical, emotional and spiritual body. When the energy flows smoothly you are in fullness, when the energy is blocked you feel tension, it can manifest itself as symptoms.

Each of the seven centers that make up your consciousness, and your energy system, represents all aspects of your experience. All your perceptions, all your senses, all your states of being, find their source inside what is called your consciousness.

Each wheel has a color and a note that harmonizes with this center. Each chakra is connected to one of the 7 colors of the rainbow (Newton) and vibrates (Pythagoras) to one of the 7 musical notes. They are also linked with the endocrine glands. The chakras are represented as spirals or wheels of light that turn clockwise but also as lotus flowers that we can imagine opening up on inspiration and closing on expiration .

Around the 19th century, a modern psychology of colors took shape. Goethe's argument that the eye, stimulated by a color claims its complement, was extended to the whole human organism as a whole. The notions of polarity and complementarity became essential elements of new color psychology. Who says psychology says therapy.

Color therapy or chromotherapy designates a set of therapeutic techniques using the properties of colored light in order to provoke physiological adjustment reactions favorable to the maintenance or restoration of health. This system based on simple principles of biology and physiology is linked to the laws of light, optics and electromagnetic phenomena. Chromotherapy is based on the fact that colors are vibrations of light, wavelengths giving off strong or weak energy. The art of the chromotherapist consists in identifying the organ or the area to be treated, selecting the appropriate colors and estimating the exposure time required according to the required energy requirement. Let us specify that the number of often contradictory treatises published on the therapeutic power of colors should teach us that the psychology of colors and chromotherapy are far from being exact sciences. The study of colors over the centuries is a corollary to the evolution of forms. Each era arranges color with shapes according to visual achievements specific to the knowledge of the different cultures present.

Source :

(1) Claude Maisonneuve, the color yellow

<http://www.almanart.com/la-couleur-jaune.html>

(2) Nathalie Gaillard, Orange

<http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-dijon/IMG/pdf/orange.pdf>

(3) <http://luxemode.over-blog.com/article-19668548.html>

(4) Gage John, Color in Art, Thames & Hudson Edition, Paris, 2009, p.78-80

Ideological art : imagology

It was in the catacombs of Rome that Western Christian art was born. It was there that, for three centuries, the followers of early Christianity began to draw, paint and sculpt small religious images in the underground, dark and narrow galleries that stretched for miles.

For a long time, some five thousand years ago, caves and caves have

served as graves and places reserved for the ceremonies of the dead. The first Christians found, in the network of funeral vaults, the ideal place to express “the revolt of the inner man against the outer man”, the latter crumbling under materialism, the superabundance of goods and pleasures they had monopolized for themselves. Fleeing the persecutions, the tumult and the violence of Roman society, small communities of men and women retired there to establish a new way of life, dedicated to the salvation of their souls.

At first, Christians continued the Jewish tradition which prohibited the representation of any living thing, man or animal. The early Christian had a real aversion to pagan art and images which served idol worship so well. Subsequently, the penetration of the cultural force of classical Greece, which never hesitated to sculpt the figure of goddesses and gods, favored the emergence of Christian art.

For, Christian art nevertheless needed the language of form, the *visible parlar* as Dante would say, the only one capable of joining the minds of the illiterate masses and fighting Gnosticism and nascent Manichaeism. They were not artists but fervent “soldiers of Christ” who used all the stratagems to educate the Romans and to make penetrate the Christic precepts in the Empire. All references to temporal life were eliminated : the horizon line disappears, nature is mistreated there, all the bodily aestheticism of classical Greece is reduced to the only austere portrait which denies the expression of the allied movement of life; but above all, the image became an abstract symbol translating the truth of spiritualist dogma in which the Christian soul must free itself from earthly ties : the body is an obstacle.

This primitive Christian art is indeed a graffiti art: the first ancient “taggers” who traced, in a few lines on the walls of the tombs, the symbolic signs and forms associated with the mysteries of Jesus: the dove, the fish, the anchor, the lamb, the vine. This passion for cryptograms to represent Christ, his Passion, the Eucharist and the Redemption gives nascent Christian art an air of pagan esotericism.

When the Emperor Constantine, in 313, signed the edict recognizing the Christian religion, Christian art left the catacombs and the faithful then devoted themselves to sculpture and architecture, two arts that they could hardly practice before. in the darkness of the catacombs. Coming out of hiding, now proclaimed the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christianity had to celebrate its victory in a tangible way by building places of worship in the image of their new imperial status; the primitive Christian art of graffiti gives way to the imperial Christian art called : the triumphal art. Significant investment is being made in the construction of new places of worship, in ornamental painting and in carving memorials.

Now free to pray and proclaim their faith, the architects brought out of the subterranean darkness churches glowing under the sun where

the faithful could gather in large numbers and sing the praises of God. It is a place of meeting, court and open market.

At the beginning of the 4th century, the Church, which had become an institution obsessed with its recent wealth, had the magnificent basilicas of Saint Peter and Saint Paul outside the walls built. These are vast sumptuous buildings which consist of a room covered with a frame roof, supported by columns which divide it into several naves. The interior decoration, most often in the apse, represents, either in painting, or in sculpture, or in mosaic, Christ, the apostles, saints and martyrs.

“Symbol of the Christian soul, which must be entirely turned towards the interior life, the basilica built in bricks, offers on the outside only a building without ornament. Inside, on the contrary, a whole luxury of decoration is lavished there to give to the faithful the impression of a supernatural place”. (Germain Bazin, *Histoire de l'art*, Edition Garamond, Paris, 1953, p.102)

The early Christian always respected the biblical prohibition of representation; God is indescribable and any image can only be a lie. Besides, the true God of Scripture is written in an unpronounceable consonant “Yhwh”, this tetragrammaton cannot be seen unlike the calligraphic beauty of the Muslim Allah. The God of the Old Testament made man in his image but forbade him to shape them. (Exodus, 20, 4). According to Ellul, “the Bible places the Word as the only possible relationship with God.”

The question of whether or not color should be present in the Christian temple is fiercely debated in the Romanesque period during the conflict between the Cluniacs and the Cistercians. Several prelates (including all the great abbots of Cluny) and a large number of theologians believe that color is light, the only part of the sensitive world which is both visible and immaterial. Now God is light. It is therefore lawful, and even advisable, to extend the place reserved for color in the church, not only to dispel the darkness but also to make more room for the divine. This is what Suger does, when from 1129-1130, he undertakes the reconstruction of the abbey church of Saint-Denis.

Islam forbids figurative representation because the world is the place of the transitory stay of man, an ephemeral place from which the faithful must detach themselves. Wary of the deceptive charms of the representation, the Muslim developed a hostility towards the images. Like the early Christians before, they set out to destroy idolatrous images, scratch the faces of ancient paintings and disfigure the heads of pagan sculptures. Not only is representing Allah an idolatrous act, but the artist who represents a living being commits a sin of pride by claiming to be the equal of Allah, the great *musawwir* (modeler) the only creator of forms. The ban on figurative images is also a way for the nascent Islam to distinguish itself from Byzantine and Christian

influences. Thus, 15 centuries before the West, the Arab world will opt for geometry and the abstraction of shapes and color.

This choice demonstrates, among other things, that scientific knowledge of the Arab world in areas such as the optics of geometric patterns and the capital role of colors in pictorial composition are in many ways much more advanced than that of the Christian West.

The artistic development of the abstract patterns decorating the facades of buildings or the tiled surfaces of floors and walls, the studied rhythm of rotations, repetitions of forms arranged with chromatic reflections confirm the existence of a mystical thought seeking to contemplate naturally harmonious patterns, as revealed by the astronomy of a divinely harmonious universe. Inspired by Pythagoras, the Arab world understood well before its time the mystical correlation between geometry and music. The geometric harmony of the stars is "the music of the spheres" finally contemplated in pictorial art. Allah is indeed an abstraction which is contemplated.

We can quietly see three different communication codes set up :

- 1) the divine Word on which Judaism is based,
- 2) the painted or sculpted image of Christianity,
- 3) stylized writing and geometric shapes : the Arabic calligraphy of Islam.

Christian thought, under the aegis of the Fathers of the Church, will reintroduce the notion of a sacred object so fought against by Judaism. The Hebrew Bible exorcises all the spiritual and mysterious powers of the world. On the other hand, in Christian rituals, we witness a renewed paganism of the object as power. In baptism, it is water which purifies, in the Eucharist, it is the host as "body of Christ" which acts, it is no longer faith. Just like in the previous pagan world, there is magic when the sacred object becomes a transforming force. This diversion towards "pagan" Christianity, of which the icon is clearly the proof, will be perceived by Islam as a regression, an impurity, leaving all the field free to present itself as the last revelation of God asking the faithful to return to purity. In Islam, idolatry is the first sin (sura 4.48, 137; sura 47.34). This sin is unforgivable and it is the only sin which prohibits one from calling oneself a Muslim . Unlike the Hebrew Word, purity resides in the sacred text of the Koran : "Everything is written".

This last mutation deserves a few words. For the Muslim, writing is a gift from God who would have taught it to Adam. The writing is of celestial origin prior to the very creation of the world. Through Koranic writing, man comes into contact with the divine and makes visible the Word of Allah transmitted to Muhammad. Pre-Islamic Arabic writing is devoid of artistic qualities. Words are made up of rough lines drawn by irregular movements. It will take the application of the Koranic copyists for a rhythm to develop, a stylistic ele-

gance through the movement studied so that the writing finally becomes an art of "beautiful writing" worthy of the veneration granted to Allah and his prophet. Allah is not a name for a god invented by Muhammad, because there has always existed for the pre-Islamic Arab world a supreme god called al-Lâh, the "Unnamable".

Around the 8th century, only Muslim Spain resisted Christian influence. Islam, like the oasis in the middle of the desert, is green. Symbol of nature by its abundance in all shades, Islam reveres the color green since the land of Islam is a garden. Tradition has it that when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad, the Prophet was dressed in green and the angel's wings were also green. Green became the emblem of the Muslim religion, so the first Muslims set out to conquer ungodly peoples by brandishing a green banner. Allah welcomes to Heaven the soul of martyred warriors who fly towards him in the form of green birds. (Anne Varichon. Colors, p.164)

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According to several Muslim exegetes, the human soul traverses a chromatic scale from black, its most degraded state, to white, supreme purity. Sufi Nam al-Din Kubra (1145-1221) taught that "the universe is made of seven levels, each of them having its specific color : Intelligence (white), Spirit (yellow), Soul (green), Nature (red), Matter (ash gray), Image (dark green), Physical body (black). On the earthly level, human feelings are declined as follows : yellow for Faith, dark blue for Beneficence, green for Tranquility, light blue for Certainty, red for Gnosis, black for Passionate Love and to Blindness. "(Robert Irwin, The Islamic World, p.196-201)

Source

Claude Maisonneuve, the color green

<http://www.almanart.com/la-couleur-verte.html>

To combat the influence of Islam, Charlemagne created *scriptoria* in the monasteries, writing workshops where literate monks would develop Christian calligraphy just as dazzling as that revealed by Arabic writings.

We owe the first representations of Jesus in icons to Byzantine Christians. This quarrel over images will divide the Christian world for several centuries. The question was settled at the Council of Nicaea in 787: "He who venerates the icons of Christ, the Virgin, Angels and Saints is no longer idolatrous." The Council thus accepted the Greco-Byzantine visual influence to the detriment of the saving mission and the primacy of the divine Word over the image as decreed by Moses in Judaism.

So too often, we forget that Jesus was also a miracle worker, a healer and that this quality earned him so much recognition that he made crowds run to meet him, the Church has not forgotten him. In order to facilitate devotion, the Church commissioned the artists to perform performances of holy healers before whom the people could kneel and ask for divine favors. For all the evils and all the misfortunes, the Church put a saint or a saint to whom one could apply, a true copy of the role previously assigned to pagan idols. Such was then the social function of art.

By deciding to build the Vatican and Saint Peter's Basilica, Pope Julius II betrayed his desire to recover for Christendom the more prestigious Roman myth, that of Rome, universal city for the renamed, Eternal City. Even more, it was a question of recovering all the heritage of ancient myths to integrate them into the new heroes of the Christian church. For the first time in the history of humanity, a

prelate of the Church asks an artist (Michelangelo) to perform an act of demiurgy, that is, to redo the work of creation, to represent it. However, this approach is fundamental because it implies that the artist is the depositary of the true power of God, that of the sacred power of creation and that the Pope is only the guardian of the artist's sacred work. Now the custodian of supreme power, does the artist become jealous of the creator to the point of identifying with him? Is the God painted in the Sistine Chapel Michelangelo himself? Like his

contemporary, he staged the painter Dürer, who represented himself in the pose of Christ blessing with his right hand, a gesture reserved until then for Jesus: the *Salvator Mundi*.

Very early on, Julius II will call Michelangelo to order: the artist is at the service of the reign of the church and the work of art affirms the values of power, those which serve for its domination. This return to order of the artist will continue throughout the history of art: each time the artist tried to create the autonomy of art, to create a power or counter-power as powerful as politics and religion, it was immediately reclaimed or banned by them.

This alliance between Pope Julius II and

Michelangelo creates what Milan Kundera, in his novel *Immortality*, will call "imagology", ie the creation of a system of ideals that influences our behavior, our political opinions, our religious faith and our aesthetic tastes. From now on, think of God and it is very likely that the image that comes to your mind is that of the old man with the white beard as imagined by Michelangelo. Moreover, this alliance between ideology and imagology in 1506 for the reconstruction of the Vatican is like the collusions between current advertising companies, public relations firms and our statesmen. In a few centuries, all the biblical characters, all the historical events were represented by the artists and marked the disappearance of naturalism identified with



paganism as a source of inspiration.

Christian imagology no longer serves only evangelization but becomes an instrument of state propaganda since the Church is invested with political power. This last point is a real betrayal of the Christ message and its refusal of all power. The New Testament teaches us in fact that during his retreat in the desert, Satan took the opportunity to offer Jesus to reign over all the kingdoms of the earth; temptation which he hastened to reject. Not only will the Church accept but will go so far as to found a kingdom, the Vatican, and total corruption of the image of Jesus as an anti-power, attesting to the legitimacy of the Pope as Head of State, 1 Muhammad's influence on Christendom could not be more substantial. The Pope, leader of Christians, imitates the Arab prophet as political leader of the Muslim world.

Who says political power, says propaganda. The sixteen years (1626-1642) in which Cardinal Richelieu exercised the functions of Prime Minister of Louis XIII are an eloquent example of ideology / imagology. One of the greatest and most ruthless statesmen that France has known, Cardinal Richelieu, used his immense power to ensure the country the political and cultural predominance of an all-powerful monarchy of divine right which was to last until 'in the Revolution of 1789.

He brilliantly orchestrated the sponsorship of the great artists, architects and intellectuals of his time in order to promote his personal interests and political goals. Clearly, he saw in art an ideal propaganda tool to support his political aims. Imagological art becomes part of the theology of domination.

The works commissioned by Richelieu bear witness to this use of art through the powerful messages they communicate: glory of the State, virtue of loyal service to the Crown, the fight against heresy and discord. Indeed, Richelieu was deeply concerned both by respect for Catholic orthodoxy and by maintaining unity in a kingdom where a very militant Protestant minority lived. Propaganda will never leave the realm of art: propaganda from patrons, the merchant elites, the French revolution and proletarian propaganda from the Bolshevik revolution, propaganda from democracies, dictatorships and, ultimately, commercial propaganda. The Church, a true ideological chameleon, will be in turn, imperial, monarchical, national, republican, democratic, capitalist, socialist, communist and even, ironically, capable of being both at the same time. both as capitalist and imperial in the United States, national and socialist in Scandinavian countries and even tempted to be "subversive" in Latin America, Africa and China on condition of propagating Western values. Faith is now accessory to propaganda and loses, perversion of Revelation, its power of transcendence, which Napoleon ironically explained in these terms : "The priests hold the people. The bishops hold the priests. And I hold the bishops."

Without a doubt, the golden palm of political imagology goes to the Sun King. In 1661, Louis XIV became the Sun King. The Sun is the star that gives life to everything, but it is also Apollo, the God of Peace and the Arts. We find at the Palace of Versailles many allusions to this god of Greek mythology because there are a lot of art objects in Versailles. The sun is also the symbol of order and regularity, it rises, sets without deviating from the rule. Louis XIV will in a way be the sun on the earth, allowing courtiers to attend all stages of his day. The king appeared dressed as the Sun at a court feast. In Versailles, Louis XIV did not hesitate to add the brilliance of gold and marbles. In - beyond the finish treatment of these materials demonstrates that taste for the most emphatic contrasts: gilded shot and tin, painted brick red ocher with white joints, especially the window joinery, whose frank ocher yellow hue 'origin.

Louis XIV was not very tall, about five feet tall, robust and broad shouldered, he impressed with his presence and elegance. They say he is handsome, his allure is majestic. Never tired, he seems to fear neither the rain nor the cold and is astonished that one can be sensitive to it. Louis XIV's "Grand Siècle" remains marked by the image of an absolute King. Invested in his functions at a very young age, educated by Cardinal Mazarin, the Sun King lays the foundations of political absolutism. The color associated with political ideology will subsequently be present in all eras. Think of Mussolini's fascist *Black Shirts* , Hitler's Nazi *Brown Shirts* , General Franco's Spanish *Phalanges* , the Hungarian *Arrow Crosses* , the Soviet *Red Guards* .

The fight between line and color

Initially, the disegno means infinitely more than just "the drawing", but it must be recognized that the first definitions given of it put the emphasis on the line rather than on the color. "The disegno has two faces," explains Benvenuto Cellini. The first is that which manifests itself in the imagination, the second results from the first and shows itself in lines and it has emboldened man to undertake to compete with his great ancestor Apollo, who gave birth to plants and herbs. , flowers and animals, all so many beautiful things and ornaments of our land. The disegno, in the broadest sense (that of disegno primo), brings together all the Apollonian arts which recreate the world: architecture, painting, sculpture, goldsmith's work, etc. In the strictest sense (that of disegno secondo), it designates the arts of drawing. Likewise Vasari defines the disegno as the "scienza delle linee" and Zuccari, in *Idea dei pittori* (1607), distinguishes the disegno interno and the disegno esterno. The disegno interno equates artistic genius to a divine force of creation, to a natura naturans. In Panofsky's phrase, "God 'draws' as he creates." But when he defined the "External drawing", Zuccari reintroduced the primacy of the line: "The external drawing is nothing other than the drawing circum-

scribed as to its form and devoid of any bodily substance: simple line, circumscription, measure and figure of any imagined and real thing; this drawing thus formed and circumscribed by a line is the example and the form of the ideal image. The line is therefore the proper body and the visual substance of the Exterior Design. “The invention of the “scientific” perspective subjects the recreation of space to a “real geometry”, reducing it to a bundle of lines: “The vanishing point could be held for the image at the infinity of lines. of vanishing lines perpendicular to the plane of the table [...] the range of vanishing lines representing the equivalent, on the plane, of that, in space, of the rays included in the visual pyramid which has its apex in the eye. The truth of nature would henceforth be produced by a geometric ordering of the forms perceived by the senses, along straight and curved lines.

This “metamorphosis of perceptual space” pushes the “rationalization of visual impression” so far that it operates “the transposition of psychophysiological space into mathematical space”. Disegno and rationality now appear to be inseparable, even synonymous. The 1470s, underlines André Chastel, are marked by the craze for this “applied geometry” which combines the effects of checkerboard, the cubic and the spherical, the square and the circle, the vanishing lines, the volumes and the plans, vertical and horizontal axes, and promotes a “hard and” mineral “style”: architectural drawing is then the paradigm of this triumph of the line. When “the return to the landscape and its atmospheric problems, towards the end of the fifteenth century” imposed itself, the interest in color counterbalanced the hegemony of drawing. But the color itself is mastered according to the rationality of perspective.

Renaissance painting is above all a wall ornament, a picture on a wall. The decorative painting must correspond to the architectural logic of the wall on which it will be hung. At the time, the wall was delimited at the top by the arch, the sides by the verticals and the bottom by the horizontal. During the Renaissance, the composition of the work with its lines of force gave the painting an architectural dimension; the drawing then takes on a phenomenal importance, because it makes it possible to give, in particular thanks to the perspective, proportions which seem exact to our eye. The line and the outline delimit the forms as essential elements of the painting, the color, although important, is considered secondary and serves only to highlight the relief of the form. Within the outline, each shape keeps a solid color. Each form becomes a universe closed on itself. Thus the table considered as a whole is made up of a certain number of color spots, delimited by a very precise and clear contour line. Renaissance painting is based on the contrast of forms. As with the theorists of the Italian Renaissance, the disegno includes the very idea of the work : “The line is the drawing, that’s all.” “According to art historian Heinrich Wölfflin, art history is made up of alternations between interest in line and in color. The Florentine quattrocento is thus dominated by the line because the world is only the

reflection of the beauty which is a spiritual idea (Plato) while Venice and the Flemings of the end of the 15th century favor color because beauty is substantial, inherent to matter. (Aristotle) ??Of course, it is not a question of definitively classifying the works and the artists in two camps, on one side that of the color and on the other that of the drawing The “colorists” knew perfectly well to draw and the supporters of “drawing” knew how to use colors! It’s a matter of choice: what should we focus on and what to reveal what? But, on several occasions in history, these two camps have nevertheless opposed each other, each claiming qualities that it refused to the other. This opposition between designers and colorists we find again during the debates of the Academy in the 17th century.

In 1646, the French painters obtained the creation of the Royal Academy of Painting which gave them an intellectual status comparable to literary authors. The promotion of painting as a liberal art entails the primacy of drawing over color, of the idea over matter, of essence over substance. A philosophical controversy stirred the Academy in 1670 and gave rise to the famous Querelle du colorie. The academy of painting, created shortly after that of literature, aimed to put order in the arts, then quickly it imposed a very rigid way of doing not supporting any interpretation. A sort of series of very strict laws thus defined what should be painted or not and in what way and not such other. Thus, drawing, as construction, structure and therefore as a composition of the whole and of the parts, is given pride of place in the painting that the academy tries to impose. Color, considered to be responsible for too much delusion because of the feelings it can arouse, the emotions it provokes, is subject to very measured use. Shadow and light must not fight each other, the shadow must remain light and transparent, the light must remain diffuse and fairly soft. Likewise, the drawing had to remain very measured, without apparent passion, without excess, without excessive vitality. It was not necessary to show temperament, to remain discreet and always try to balance his compositions, by the drawing as by the color.

Classicism hardens and simplifies the divide, now dogmatically asserted, between color and design, color and line. Two centuries after the formulations of the disegno theory and after the invention of geometric perspective, the line / color debate took a new turn. It is now a question of distinguishing a good mimesis, founded in reason and intended to convince as much as to please, from a bad mimesis, seductive but fallacious. Drawing, because it is one of the languages of rationality, is part of the cultural system of general rhetoric. The color, it emerges from a rhetoric of the body, it speaks to the senses, it commits the artist on the path of decadence.

However, other artists at the same time, wishing to show what is exciting in life, attach great importance to what defines it first: movement and colors. Roger de Piles, second theoretician of French art after Félibien, published in 1673 “Dialogue sur le colorie”, in which he

praised the colorie through the work of Rubens. He advised Richelieu to cede his Poussin to Louis XIII and to build up a collection of works by Rubens. In 1690, the revolution took place, the renewal of generations consecrates Rubens genius of painting. The voice is free for La Fosse, Boucher, Watteau and, later, Delacroix. Enhancement of bright colors, color work, impasto, distance view. So, with what we call the baroque, everything is set in motion, in colored vibration, everything is played out in movement. Shadow and light become means of bringing a moment to life, almost real, as if we were witnessing action.

The baroque period acquires the awareness of chiaroscuro which becomes the main visual element of the composition by a game of opposition and balance between the light and shadow masses. The play of shadow and light allows the interpenetration of color, brings about the disappearance of the contour line and its limits. There is therefore exchange, communication between the elements of the painting, which refers to the birth of Gutenberg's printing press. But baroque painting is also based on the contrast of light and dark colors, it is a world of tensions, conflicts between empty areas like deserts opposed to other rich and concentrated in the image of social classes, metropolises imperialists versus the colonies. Baroque is the painting of pictorial shocks reflecting the dramatic tensions between conquerors and conquered and even the internal confrontation of social antagonisms typical of nascent capitalism. This dualistic conception finds its *raison d'être* no longer in the achievement of a common goal but in the effort to unite what is torn apart. This opposition between line or color artists will even be theorized by an art historian, critic and philosopher named Wölflin, in a



famous chapter called linear and pictorial, where he opposes the painters of touch, material and from colored movement, to those of the drawing which control and remain faithful to the idea.

Believing that "the great painters, like Raphael and Michelangelo, insisted on the line when finishing" and that "they thus revived the contour", Ingres advises the painter to take a model from the sculptor: "We must make sculptural painting. "The master of French neoclassicism reduced the importance of colors to very modest proportions:" Color adds ornaments to painting; but she is only the lady of the ward, since she only makes the true perfections of art more lovable. [...] Rubens and Van Dyck may appeal to the eyes, but they deceive them; they are from a bad colourist school, from the school of lies. Titian, this is the true color, this is nature without exaggeration, without forced brilliance! It's just. Point of color too fiery, it is anti-historic. [...] A historical tone leaves the mind at ease. "

These maxims of Ingres summarize the ideology of art that German historiography calls "historicist" and which in particular dominated the system of

the Academies of Fine Arts until the beginning of the 20th century. Back to the line with the academicism of the early nineteenth which favors drawing and composition. The color is used to fill the space between the lines. It hardly has any expressive value.

The Impressionists, the Fauvists and the Futurists are once again making the color pop. This explosion of colors is indebted to the new science of artificial colors. In 1856, a young chemist, William Henry Perkin (1838-1907) tried to synthesize quinine to combat the malaria

which affected the English troops stationed in India. These tests led him to oxidize an aniline derivative, allyltoluidine. He obtained a red-brown precipitate which had nothing to do with quinine but which aroused the chemist's curiosity. He had just discovered a good quality dye for textiles, which he called aniline purple, or mauveine. It was fame and wealth for Perkin. He had just invented the first synthetic dye that could be used by industry.

Queen Victoria wore a mauve silk dress at the Royal Exhibition in 1862, and a stamp was issued (the lilac penny), in the same tones. It was the consecration for the chemist. Empress Eugenie made this color fashionable because mauve went well with the color of her eyes. It became in France the favorite color of this Napoleon III era. Germany took over and developed a very important organic chemistry industry and synthesized different dyes. France did not believe in the development of this chemistry, which caused a major delay. Berthelot did not believe in atoms, which was catastrophic for French industry. German chemists (BASF company) thus succeeded in synthesizing alizarin (madder) and flooded the market with this synthetic product. The French government supported the producers of madder, but it had to realize rather quickly the great superiority of the synthetic product, much cheaper. In 1878 they produced 500 tons of madder, while the synthetic product corresponded to 30,000 tons.

It was always the German chemists who succeeded in synthesizing indigo, which ruined all the natural indigo industry. The BASF company repeated with the English what had happened to the French with madder. Synthetic indigo is invading the market, despite the efforts of the English government to favor the use of natural indigo. It is impossible to fight against progress. In 1897 England sold 10,000 tonnes of natural indigo and Germany 600 tonnes of synthetic indigo. In 1911 the figures became 870 and 22,000. The synthetic dye had won. Currently the still present company BASF owns 40% of the world production.

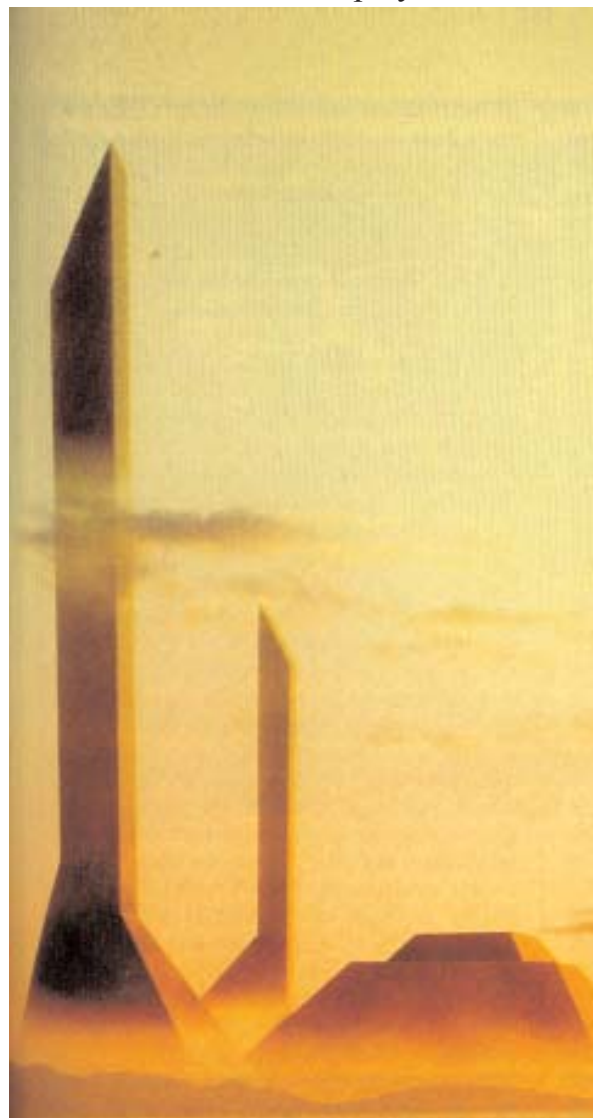
In 1864, Eugène Chevreul published *Colors and their applications to industrial arts*, a book in which he listed 14,400 chromatic tones of natural or artificial dyes (aniline, mauveine, alizarin, fuchsine, methylene). A young German medical student, Paul Ehrlich, came across new drugs by studying the dyes of bacteria. He noticed that some were specific and developed a bactericidal dye called Salvarsan which was used to treat syphilis. It was efficient, but its molecular structure was very different from what Ehrlich thought. It doesn't matter. The study of dyes with a strong affinity for proteins and capable of destroying germs, led to the discovery of sulfonamides, which were major drugs for the fight against infections.

In the 19th century the impressionists took advantage of synthetic pigments. The prices go down a lot since blue overseas costs ten times less than lapis lazuli. Impressionists often appreciate these new pig-

ments from modern chemistry, which give brilliant colors.

“The machine breeds beauty. “(Futuristic slogan)

The industrial art embodied by the futurist movement is an open war against the institutional immobility of bourgeois society. This ode to the machine was taken up by all those who imagined a mystique of the



new man transfigured by a “total art” of the civilization to come singing the glory of machinery and of the industrial object as the foundation of the new universal city. The same year 1909, Marinetti published *Malarka le futuriste* where the artist finally delivers his prophetic vision of a mechanical and winged superman. This Icarian man-god is at the heart of the futuristic cosmogony where the body is fantasized as the “glorious body” of the mystical machinist and driven by her desire to exalt industrial progress. It was in 1910, in the review *La Demolizione* that he delivered his sermon on the new religion of violence, the only one capable of preventing Italy from sinking into “lazy egoism (of the proletariat), economic (of liberalism), in the miserliness of the mind (anarchism) and of the will. (democracy). »(The words in parenthesis are ours)

Advocating a violent revolt, artistic and political against

the triumphant bourgeoisie of the early twentiethth century, futurist artists will discover a revolutionary social function and weave aesthetic frame of unprecedented collaboration between art and politics. The improvement of the machine became a duty: the duty to invent.

It was in 1909, in France, on the front page of the newspaper *Le Figaro* that the *Manifeste du Futurisme* was published. Its author, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, makes eleven proposals that express much more of a state of mind than a base of unshakeable rules. Among these we find the love of the machine, revolt, admiration and of course what will characterize futurism more than anything else: movement, speed, and conceptions of very advanced forms of civilization, making appeal to wars, revolutions, and the energy of the masses. Energy, dynamism, speed, power, vitality, so many attributes expressing a new scale of cultural values ??focused on youth.

“By renouncing a large part of his humanity, man could arrive at divinity. He emerged from this second chaos and created the machine in his image: the image of power, but torn from his flesh and isolated from his humanity.” (Mumford, *Technique et civilization*, 1950, p. 55)

Here is therefore part of the *Manifesto of Futurism* as composed by Marinetti and published on February 20, 1909 in *Le Figaro* :

- 1- We want to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and recklessness.
- 2- The essential elements of our poetry will be courage, daring and revolt.
- 3- Literature having so far magnified thoughtful immobility, ecstasy and sleep, we want to exalt aggressive movement, feverish insomnia, gymnastic step, somersault, slap and punch.
- 4- We declare that the splendor of the world has been enriched with a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car with its trunk adorned with big pipes like snakes with explosive breath... a roaring car, which seems to run on grape, is more beautiful than the “victory of Samothrace”.
- 5- We want to sing about the man who holds the steering wheel, whose ideal rod crosses the earth, launched itself on the circuit of its orbit.
- 6- The poet must spend himself with warmth, brilliance and lavishment, to increase the enthusiastic fervor of the primordial elements.
- 7- There is no more beauty than in the struggle. No masterpiece without an aggressive character. Poetry must be a violent assault on unknown forces, to summon them to lie down before man.
- 8- We are on the extreme promontory of the centuries! ... What is the use of looking behind us, as long as we have to smash down the mysterious doors of the impossible? Time and space died yesterday. We are already living in the absolute, since we have already created the eternal omnipresent speed.
- 9- We want to glorify war - the only hygiene in the world -, militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of the anarchists, the beautiful ideas that kill and... contempt for women...
- 10- We want to demolish museums, libraries, fight moralism, feminism and all opportunist and utilitarian cowardice.

11- We will sing about the large crowds agitated by work, pleasure or revolt: the multicolored and polyphonic waves of revolutions in modern capitals; the nocturnal vibration of arsenals and construction sites under their violent electric moons; the gluttonous stations swallowing smoky snakes; the factories suspended from the clouds by the strings of their smoke; bridges with gymnastic leaps thrown over the diabolical cutlery of sunny rivers; the adventurous liners scenting the horizon; the large-chested locomotives pawing on the rails like huge steel horses bridled with long pipes, and the slippery flight of airplanes, whose propellers flap the flag and applause from an enthusiastic crowd. (...) Standing on the top of the world, we once again challenge the stars. “

Source :

http://www.cnrs.fr/cw/dossiers/doschim/decouv/couleurs/loupe_symbolique.html

<http://www.snof.org/encyclopedie/la-couleur-au-fil-des-siecles>

Towards the supremacy of color

Already the impressionists like Claude Monet had committed themselves to “painting the light”. To do this, they developed the technique of mixing pure colors applied directly to the canvas in the form of small fractionated spots so that it is on the retina of the eye that the luminous composition occurs. With the impressionist painters, the enhancement of colors “rainbow” canvases in reaction to the blackness of soot from carboniferous industries. The great merit of impressionist painters is to have understood the scientific knowledge of colors brought to light by Newton and especially to have applied it to the pictorial world by linking graphic volume and colors. The emphasis the Impressionists placed on the question of color led them to develop the thesis that each object is influenced by the colors of surrounding objects, that each shape has a color, and that the colors of different shapes influence each other. So our visual perception of the world is based on the play of colors. Quietly, the visual achievements resulting from the laws of optics converge towards the design of a vibratory field of colors interacting with each other.

The pole opposed to Ingres, in the *fabula de lineis et coloribus* according to the French version, is Delacroix, presented by Baudelaire as the magician of colors. We cannot however forget that Delacroix contented himself with rebalancing the line / color pair that the Ingres school had transformed into a hierarchy.

The main thing for Delacroix is to reconcile lines and colors as closely as possible. If Delacroix wrote, as Cézanne would later say, that “the straight line is nowhere in nature”, this is the ideal itself; everything there is idealized by man. The straight line itself is his invention, for it is nowhere in nature. Let us remember, however, that there is no longer any question of the ancient opposition between drawing

and colors. The notion of “line” in Delacroix is more linked to that of composition, structure and architecture, of the “design” of the artist.

Source :

Jacques Le Rider, “Line and color: history of a dispute”, *Revue germanique internationale* [Online], 10 | 1998, uploaded September 26, 2011, URL: <http://rgi.revues.org/694>

The color plan

Paul Signac will draw from Delacroix the lesson according to which

it is advisable to seek the harmony of lines and color: “Once his linear composition has been determined, the neo-impressionist will think of supplementing it with a combination of directions and colors appropriate to the subject. [...] The artist’s work found an echo within the scientific community. Seurat and Signac in accordance with scientific analysis of the light spectrum began to decompose the chromatic elements into tiny particles. This pictorial research leads to Seurat’s pointillism and Signac’s divisionism, while the paintings of wild animals explode in a chromatic orgy.

The fawn painting is particularly attached to the work of color. The works are easily recognizable by the use on large surfaces of colors in brilliant hues. The figurative images tend, by the simplification of forms,

to a certain outline of abstraction. Fauvism appeared in France at the same time as Expressionism in Germany. But if German expressionism is characterized by a tormented atmosphere, sometimes violent, the form of expressiveness of Fauvism is quite different. The dynam-



ics of this group are much more positive and full of vitality. This movement is a continuation of the research begun by Cézanne at the time of the Impressionists. If the preoccupation of the moment was the questioning around the gaze and an almost scientific approach to the study of color and the various optical effects, Cézanne, for his part, was a little behind. His research was driven by the same concerns, but the form of his expression was very different and the very personal character of his work reflects his solitary temperament in the face of his own artistic journey. Very quickly, in his paintings, we can observe a simplification of forms and a work of color by large areas of paint. His desire to find a way to fully exalt color pushes him to further refine his images.

This notion is taken a little further by Gauguin. During his trip to Tahiti, he discovers the splendor of the colors of the country. Also seeking to express the explosion and intensity of these magical colors and lights that he observes, he results in a simplification of the drawing.

Towards the end of his life, Gauguin produced paintings in which color undeniably took precedence over drawing and expressed itself with an intensity and virulence never before observed.

Fauve painters will continue this open path and go even further in this process. The drawing then tends to disappear and gives way to colored spots, surfaces laid in thick and wide strokes of pure colors. From then on, the form is drawn directly by the colored

expanse. It is a sensual and spontaneous expression.

The term “fawn” can express the natural, lively, spontaneous, almost wild aspect of the use of color. It can also evoke a certain primitivism,

as proclaimed by Gauguin who voluntarily sought to approach this primitive aspect of painting by immersing himself in the Tahitian world. Indeed, it was for him a way to take a new (almost blank) look at painting, outside the coded references of academic painting of the Western world of his time.

The works of Fauvism will open the doors to an increasingly marked abstraction of the image, until later culminating in abstract art. Many artists will pursue open questions about color and go as far as creating monochrome paintings, like Malevich or Klein. Others will work on the very essence of color, each in their own way, in very varied ways, in a sensitive way as in the work of Rothko for example, or in a more scientific way, like the artists of Op 'Art

At the same time, physicists Einstein and Planck discovered that light is both particle (photon) and wave. It would therefore be necessary to replace the term "pointillism" applied to Seurat's painting and "divisionism" for Signac by "photonics", of which it is really premonitory. From their respective work will be born a "grammar of the harmony of colors" allied to optics including the technique of "photonic pointillism" which marked an important stage in the collaboration between art and science. For the first time in the history of art, a pictorial style preceded by a few years one of the greatest discoveries of modern physics. Indeed, these tables were "constructed" intuitively (pointillism of Seurat around 1886, divisionism of Signac around 1900) in accordance with the future laws (1905) of modern physics. The characters and the nature in general of the "photonic" paintings opened the doors to a new type of perception : molecular perception in genetic biology and the perception of the atom (atomization) in pure physics. Pure rationality led to a poetics that was just as new and so hoped for for centuries because it was intuitively revealed by Pythagoras: the universal harmony between the micro and the macro, the infinitely small and the infinitely large.

Modern art, since the end of the 19th century, seems to have irreversibly settled the debate between line and color, in favor of color. The table is no longer referential, but constitutes a system whose coherence is immanent. The painter reconstructs, in Cézanne's own words, "a harmony parallel to nature". The nabi movement strived to rediscover the sacred character of art and was characterized by the use of large flat areas of color having as its main theme the study of light. The nabi is an artistic, intellectual and spiritual movement ; painting must fulfill a priestly and metaphysical function : art has meaning only if it aspires to Redemption, only if it is based on a desire to improve the world. As its name suggests, "nabi", a Hebrew word meaning "prophet" gives the artist the title of romantic seer who believes in the reconciling power of peoples. The artist had to reject any form of preparation such as the choice of the subject or the sketches to concentrate only on the emotions of the moment and the unconscious impulses.

At the same time, (1886) a certain Georges Eastman invented a chemical process which made it possible to crystallize in luminous pigments the light absorbed on a roll film, a newly patented technique put in a box and marketed under the name "Kodak N° 1." This discovery opened the door to the mass "photonic pointillism" of photography, film and television. This democratization of the visual arts mainly shook pictorial art but also participated in its renewal, not to say its rebirth like a sphinx reborn from its ashes.

Faced with this new technique of reproducing reality that is photography, the painter Robert Delaunay began to compose "color for itself". Inspired by the chromatic theories of Chevreul, (In 1839, the French chemist Eugène Chevreul proposes an explanation of the visual contrast: "In the case where the eye sees at the same time two contiguous colors, it sees them the most dissimilar possible, as for their optical composition [chromaticity] and as to the height of their tone [clarity]".) Delaunay therefore detached himself from the representation of the object to orient himself towards the study of light decomposed into colors by the luminous prism. This chromatic study will lead him to the discovery of the dynamization of the painting by total abstraction. Art is more than the servile imitation of nature. Moreover, what quantum theory of light teaches us at the same time is that observable reality is a game of consciousness with consciousness, that matter, consciousness and spirit form one and the same Totality. This is why the first abstract artists will seek to transcribe the spiritual meanings of light into everyday life as states of harmony in the world. With his series of *Colored Rhythms*, Delaunay was the first to construct a "quantum" poetics of color conceived as fields of forces in action revealed plastically by "simultaneous contrasts". Still for Delaunay, the painting must constitute a plastic fact "by invigorating the surface of the canvas with *colored sentences* generating a space-phenomenon" to "bring to intuition certain properties of the natural or spiritual cosmos." Finally, Delaunay's study of light broken down into colors by the luminous prism will lead him to the discovery of the dynamization of the painting by total abstraction. With Delaunay, the concept of a field of contrasts supports new scientific theories, including that of the indissoluble continuity of a world made up of vibratory fields of waves and expanding particles. As we can see, abstract art is born from the synthesis of all the visual achievements expressed by the previous artistic movements, a kind of crystallization of the visual achievements resulting from artistic intuition in accordance with the laws of optics and physics of the time.

Meanwhile, cubism oscillates between composition and decomposition, in other words the deconstruction of the planes of an object forms the framework for a half-figurative, half-abstract composition : abstract geometry contains a visible form. With Picasso (1881-1973) the line is clearly privileged, but modernity is on the move: the line of the drawing is made directly with the color of the brush, a way undoubtedly to overcome this old opposition....

Cubism also applied a fundamental rule of the discoveries of optics, namely that the trace of an object perceived remains impregnated for a certain period of time on the retina while binding to the next form to form a continuous action. The impressionist vibratory field of colors is juxtaposed with the cubist vibratory field of forms. To this internal dynamism, the futurists will graft the external dynamism of the object in movement and the successive superposition of the various phases of the movement. Internal dynamism coupled with external dynamism gives rise to the invention of cinema.

While Planck and Einstein establish in the form of equations the foundations of quantum theory and relativity, Kandinsky and Mondrian also advance the foundations of a new way of seeing : spatiality or composition of space; the situation of a form takes place in space, the origin of form is space. Inspired by observation and scientific experimentation, the logic of artistic development now involves the formulation of pictorial hypotheses in the same way as mathematical equations. Abstract art became a laboratory for formal research. The evolution of visual acquisition is concomitant with the evolution of nature and the universe and according to our understanding.

Faced with such a finding, it is no longer a question of painting a particular picture but of carrying out a condensed artistic conception responding to the great questions of man towards the universe.

The spatio-temporal mode of vision generates a painting in which shapes and colors become an assembly of elements united in a whole.

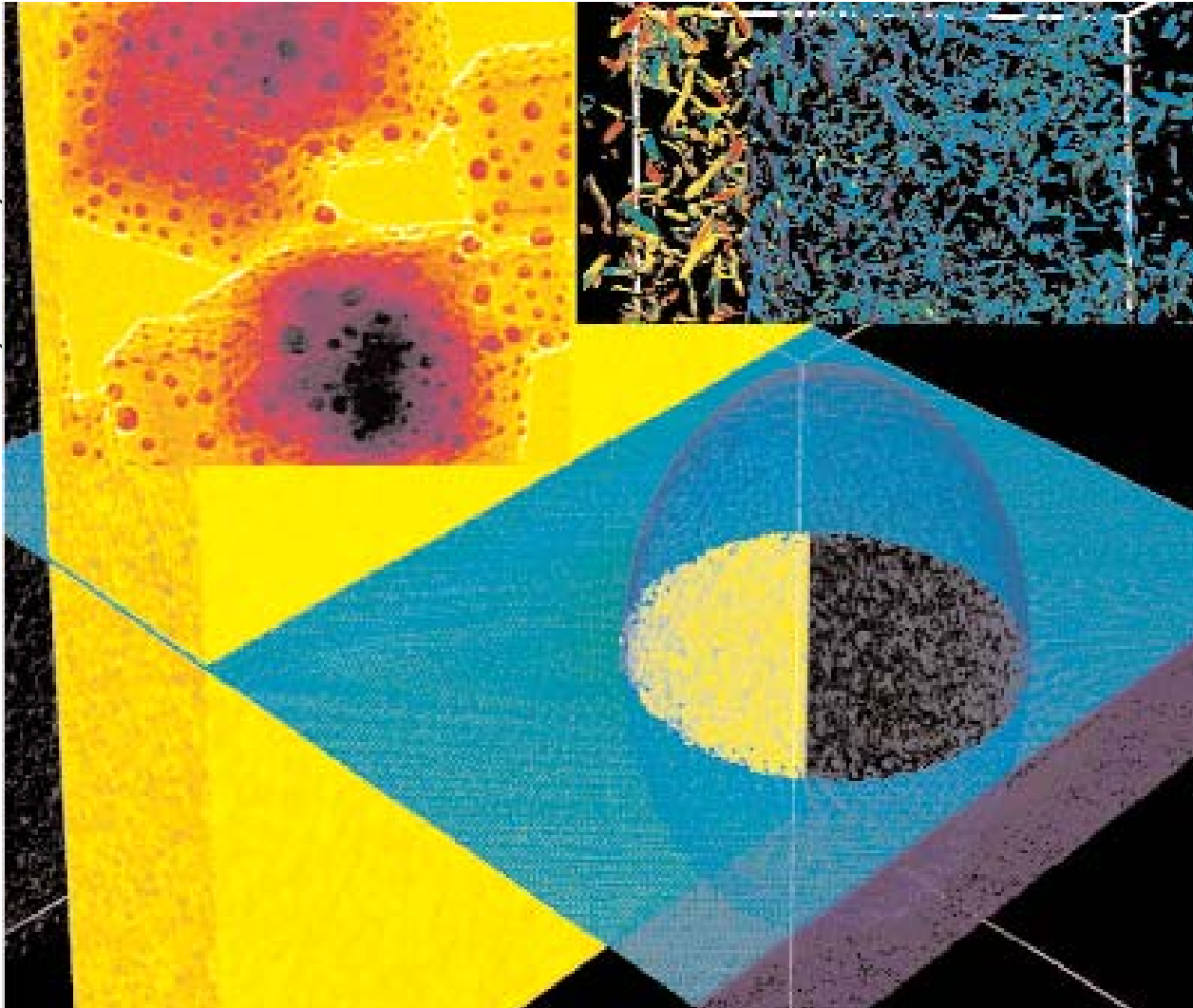
We no longer perceive the world as an assemblage of isolated objects, we see it as the continuity and interdependence of the links between the shape and the reflected color of the objects.

Inspired by the “mental revolution” of science, Piet Mondrian is an apostle of a mystique of color (neoplasticism) which invites us to “free ourselves from individualism” to achieve “the serene emotion of the Universal. “ Neoplasticism is a painting of relations, based on the

paradox of the “extreme one” and the “extreme other”, which, according to Mondrian, governs the organization of nature and the universe as a whole, and which is reflected in painting by the only contrast of the fundamental colors arranged in horizontal and vertical lines : over the course of his compositions, trees, flowers, mountains, objects become rectangles, horizontal and vertical squares that he distributes on the canvas in proportions governed by the golden ratio known since ancient Greece.

Nature with its curved or broken lines must bow to an art of pure forms, a conception of the world which calls for a new order governed by man. Universal beauty is a plastic and intelligible harmony. Inspired by the axiomatic research in mathematics of theosophist Schoenmakers published under the title *Principles of plastic mathematics*, his first neoplastic composition represents per-

pendicular black lines, enclosing in an irregular grid planes of primary colors (yellow, red, blue) and non-color (white, black, gray). The whole evolution of Mondrian as a painter has had as its end the visual interpretation of the universal laws hidden under the phenomena; in short, “the representation of things must give way to the exclusive representation of relations”, a plastic representation of the fields of



cosmic forces that the theory of quantum fields subsequently demonstrated. From this perspective, elementary particles do not exist in themselves but only through the interactions they generate. This set of effects is similar to a vibratory field: everything we observe is part of a set of fields: electromagnetic field, gravitational field, proton field, electronic field. For Mondrian, in this field of cosmic forces, the painter is a mediator who transforms opposing elements into harmonious compositions and like a god, through creation, the painter breathes life into the canvas. Thus each work, amalgamation of soul and material, reveals cosmic beauty in a different way, which gives the viewer a feeling of appeasement and happiness.

Do we not also find in the work of the Dutch painter a theory of pictorial chaos where the tensions and the sequences of perpendicular and vertical lines, squares, circles, triangles attracting or repelling the primordial colors, form an immense conflicting device? from which arises the constructive dynamism of a plastically well structured order. What at the beginning the gaze perceives as incoherence of plans, structural illogicality, imbalance of the color ranges, off-center rhythm of the forms like so many faults in composition, finally subtly reveal new relationships which transform the apparent disorder into balance. Mondrian's neoplasticism is a dialectical composition which concerns not only the arts but all the activities of man. Piet Mondrian spoke at this time of universal rest, of absolute balance, he dreamed of a perfectly balanced society and put forward the rules of harmony governing the world in order to escape the tragic disorder of life. The variety of shapes, lines and colors represent so many antagonisms present in nature but unified by a cosmic force that common language calls "beauty and harmony".

Wölfflin reduces the development of art to five pairs of categories. He insists on: "The passage from "linear" to "pictorial"; that is to say from the consideration of the line as a conductor of the gaze, to the increasing devaluation of this line. More generally, we are dealing, on the one hand, with a way of grasping bodies in their palpable characters - contours and surfaces; on the other, to a mode of apprehension which is based solely on visual appearance and can for that reason renounce the "plastic" drawing. The primary function of composition, light and color is no longer to highlight form; they lead their own lives". The passage from classicism to "baroque" and modernity will have allowed light and color to acquire a life independent of objects. With Rembrandt, color springs here and there from a mysterious depth. "The color of the painting leads its own game.

The new quantum science reveals to us that it is the very act of observation and the awareness that it entails that concretizes reality, the matter observed. Objective reality does not exist ; any decision to observe implies a subjective decision of the spectator towards only part of reality, our gaze is discriminatory in the sense that we see what we want to see.

The next step, consisting in completely rethinking the status of color and line in abstract painting, in making color and line autonomous, will be taken by Kandinsky. Historians of 20th-century painting most often insist on the aesthetics of colored abstraction that characterized the first phase of Kandinsky's development. The old dispute between color and line, color and drawing, is abolished, now that mimesis is abandoned. "There is indeed in Kandinsky the harmonic postulate of a correspondence between the order of colors and that of shapes (lines, angles and simple primary shapes: circle, square, triangle). The triangle and the circle are not geometry, but more: pictorial means. It also happens that sometimes silence speaks louder than noise, that silence acquires a clear eloquence.

"White sounds like silence,
a nothing before any beginning "
(Kandinsky)

Invested with new powers, color in art will meet the same fate as equations in mathematics with only one difference ; abstract equations are addressed to the intelligible while pictorial abstraction renews the dialogue already undertaken by Aristotle and expressed by Goethe in his *Treatise on Colors* , a dialogue, I say, between color and soul.

With his book *Du spirituel dans l'art et dans la peinture in particulier*, Wassily Kandinsky abandons scientific research into color and the geometrization of shapes (blue circle, red square, yellow triangle) and adopts a more mystical position in accordance with the current of "naturphilosophy" which he calls "principle of interior necessity". Paradoxically, artists at the beginning of the 20th century were inspired by and at the same time openly contested scientific positivism, which caused a slide towards empiricism, most of the time influenced by the esoteric, mystical, theosophical and anthroposophical currents in vogue. From then on, it was a question of reflecting on the network of interdependence that emerges from their teaching.

Unlike previous centuries, avant-garde artists of the "century of color" while being interested in scientific discoveries concerning the chemistry of colors sought to reconcile them with the rather lyrical, poetic approach of color as "Sensation and substance", union of cold materialism with the warm world of emotions, the perfect abstraction being an ecstasy that is both mathematical and poetic. For Kandinsky it was nothing less than discovering the correspondences between painting and music, color and sound. Indeed, he defended the idea that color and form them spring from the same source as music and notes on the one hand and on the other hand, believed that all pictorial constructions are both mathematical and poetic. Painting corresponds to a music of colors whose shapes can be read like the notes on a staff or the numbers and signs of an equation. The painting becomes the equivalent of the "music of the spheres" so dear to Pythagoras, that

which precisely opposes the constructive mathematical order to chaos.

Color has less and less to do with physical reality. From Plato, he retains a more spiritual vision, which for example, declared in the *Timaeus* : the soul of the world is built according to the same rules of harmony as the human soul, which is why Kandinsky will often speak of art abstract as “vibration of the soul”.

More than Plato, it was Goethe who greatly influenced the Russian painter with his theory on the power of colors and on the mystique of the human eye : the roundness of the iris as the sun receiving the light and the colors emitted by the human eye. natural sun, the emitter, thus establishing the close correspondence between man and the Universe that Kandinsky will describe in these terms :

“Every work is technically born - just as the cosmos was born - by catastrophes, chaotic clamors of the instruments, which end up forming a symphony which is called the music of the spheres. The creation of the work is the creation of the world. It is up to the artist to replace nature, to anticipate it, and to arrange the chords, the assonances, the relations of the forms, the sounds, the lines and the colors, and that according to what ‘he knows about inner Necessity, to create new aesthetic universes’”. (Wassily Kandinsky, *On Spirituality in Art, and in Painting* in particular, Folio Essais, Denoël, 1989)

Kandinsky sought to show us in his works that the relationship between forms and colors is a coherent system resulting from the spir-

it which aims to bring together antagonists previously in struggle : abstraction and life because “to paint is the stormy meeting of various worlds destined to create a new world from their struggle with each other”. Oppositions, contradictions - this is our harmony, he concludes. It looks like a statement by Paul Dirac on the matter / antimatter relationship. Indeed for Kandinsky, the new physics of Einstein and Planck as well as the psychic research initiated by Freud constitute

the framework of a major spiritual turning point of humanity because these works destroy the pretensions of scientific materialism with its own tools. The new experimental science, abstract art and experimental psychoanalysis form the contemporary trinity of a new spiritualism which is revealed before our eyes.

For Mondrian and Kandinsky, art is a metaphysics that prompts the viewer to have a spiritual experience. Then came Malevich who pushed abstraction to its last metaphysical entrenchment, its ultimate goal by making it cross the “quantum leap”.

At the beginning of XXth century, when the light became the main field of investigation of the nascent quantum science, she also found her artistic recognition in the famous *Square white on white background*

Kasimir Malevich, mystical icon of abstract art. This major work of contemporary abstraction comes to complete a cycle spanning several millennia.

Originally in a huge crash, absolute nothingness bursts giving birth to light, the first act of creation, which contains within it the entire palette of colors. White designates the heat which allows life to



bloom, such is the initial principle of the first cosmogonies of our ancestors. Morning white rises from dullness to shine, evening white descends from shine to dullness, but both are empty, “suspended between absence and presence, between moon and sun, between the two sides of the sacred”. All birth is therefore rebirth: it is the nycthemeral cycle of life.

Already, on the grayish walls of Paleolithic caves, chalk materials were used to color animal representations in white, and in the Middle Ages white was added to the parchment of illuminated manuscripts (which were light beige or eggshell). In ancient societies, colorless was defined as anything that did not contain pigments. In painting and dyeing, it was therefore the color of the support before it was used: the gray of stone, the brown of raw wood, the beige of parchment, ecru of natural fabric. ... It was by making paper the main medium for texts and images that printing introduced an equivalence between colorless and white.

In the Neolithic era, pastoral societies gave white wines a very powerful status since milk was their primary food source. In Africa, father's semen and mother's milk are the genesis of life. Milk is then poured on the altars as an offering to the Gods and the white color accompanies most initiation rites since the initiate is the one who has just been symbolically reborn.

White represents wisdom, it identifies with the inner light in many religions. In India, ancient texts designate white as the state of purity of the Brahmins. In the Buddhist pantheon, Gautama the Buddha is shown in white symbolizing transcendent wisdom. In Japanese Shinto rites, sheets of pristine white paper are placed in places of worship to encourage the contemplation of pilgrims to achieve enlightenment. (Anne Varichon. Colors, p.10 and sss)

White as absolute purity is associated with divine power. White is therefore the primordial light, the origin of the world, the beginning of time, everything that relates to the transcendent. We find this association in monotheistic religions and in many societies. Both in the Bible and in the *New Testament*, white is the color of God transfigured. The white light which comes from above and blinds us with its power, represents first of all the Divine, the one that we do not see because this white solar light is dispersed by refraction, dazzles us, and we cannot look such intensity “in the face”: this divine light makes us lower our eyes and adopt a humble attitude. Thus in ancient religious paintings, God and his messengers descend from Heaven in the form of a blinding light of pure white.

This is the case with the Koran in which white designates the notions of clarity, of unity in the image of Allah. White is also the secret corresponding to the inner light among the Sufis, relating to the inner core of being. During the pilgrimage to Mecca, the Muslim wears the

irham for the occasion, a white garment which abolishes any distinction of nationality and social class. Naturally the sovereigns who represent the authority of the Church, therefore of divine essence, adopt the color white: the standards, the fleur-de-lis.

The *White Square*, by the cosmic force which is infused into it, is the final result of an obstinate search for the invisible and the supernatural undertaken for several millennia by our prehistoric ancestors who had the strong intuition of their existence. It is the theological affirmation of the One, by definition unimaginable, inconceivable, inaccessible. Malevich succeeded in imprinting in the “matter” the absolute unity from which all beings derive, to metamorphose the canvas into a force representative of the overall experience of being fusional.

“Having conquered” the reign of the sun “(that of the old” terrestrial “logic), the appearance of these pictorial planes affirms the establishment of a new order, an order situated beyond the limits of our understanding. Its logic no longer refers to our “world of flesh and bones”, it is superior “. (Andrei Nakov, The avant-gardes, the Russian avant-garde, p.14)

This revelation of light, as the subject of the pictorial representation, crosses the canvas like the cosmic rays of the sidereal infinity and Malevich, concluding in his *Suprematist Manifesto*, “that at this moment, the path of man passes through space. “Suprematism, “semaphore of color”, is located in its “infinite abyss”. The Russian painter accomplishes a real “miracle of art” that is to say that “the Absolute becomes accessible to consciousness through the intermediary of the work which reflects it” and in this sense, the *white square on the background white*, light on light, is far superior in its purity to the calligraphic abstraction of the Muslim Allah or the tetragrammaton JHVH the unpronounceable name of the Judeo-Christian Divinity.

The *White Square* is the last real answer, and perhaps the only one, that art could provide to this open question, since prehistoric times and cave art, on the ultimate representation of God: the Origin, when contemplated with “the eyes of the soul”, is enlightenment. Art has achieved celestial purity: White, symbol of origins, life, death and rebirth.

“Jesus takes Peter, James and John with him and leads them alone up a mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them and his clothes became resplendent, so white that no fuller on the earth can whiten the type.” (Mark, 9, 2-5)

“Allah has seventy thousand veils of Light and Darkness: if he were to remove them, then the splendours of His Appearance would undoubtedly consume all who saw Him with their gaze.” (Commentary (Ghazali) of the Light Verse of the Quran)

Art has achieved the goal of its metaphysical mission. Let's not forget that art and religion are Siamese twins born in the same Paleolithic cave. Since prehistoric times, art and the sacred have been intimately linked by the same umbilical cord, the first seeking the representation of the second. The function of art then is to reveal man to himself. It is through the mediation of the created object that humans will learn to know themselves; at that time, art was mainly educational:

“Let us not doubt it: everything that man adds as needed without any additional satisfaction, what is called art, has only one motive: to manifest to himself that he does not is not that a living; that he is not only a being who eats, who drinks, who sleeps, who fights, who moves but a spiritual subject who knows so well how to rise above the demands of the organism ... “(Gobry Ivan, *The Meaning of Beauty*, p.25)

This is the conclusion to be drawn from Malevich's work: “white supremacism” as “pure action” of pure mental energy propels Man into the “revolution of the pure spirit” which goes beyond materially experimental knowledge. Intuition and Reason, far from being in opposition, are united forever in the Unity of White, of Light.

The mystical theology of Light developed by the monks is part of a search for union with divine energy “which transforms the body and makes it spiritual (...) so that the whole man becomes Spirit” . (Al Triads, 2.9). This means that “he who participates in divine energy (...) himself becomes, in a way, light; he is united with the Light, and with the Light he sees in full consciousness all that remains hidden from those who have not had this grace “Not only is light the most adequate revelation of the very essence of divinity but the mystically perfect being is itself transfigured, shining, radiant. (V. Lossky, *Theology of Light*, p. 110 cited by Mircea Eliade in *History of religious beliefs and ideas*, Payot, 1978)

“You have granted me, Lord, that this corruptible temple - my human flesh - to unite with Your holy flesh, that my blood mingle with Yours; and henceforth I am Your transparent and translucent member.” (Symeon the New Theologian)

The entry of the divine Light into the consciousness thus makes it possible to discover the perfection of the Origins and the End, from the Paradise before history, to the ultimate fate of man who will put an end to history. In sum, all the great ancient mythologies attributed a luminous nature to the divinity or the entity which holds the transfiguring knowledge.

In India, the Light is the very essence of the Cosmos through which the veil of *maya* is torn. Cosmic creation is a divine “game”, an illusion (*maya*) and only illumination makes it possible to pierce the mirage, to decipher the secret of *maya* , thereby grasping that life is a free and spontaneous “game” of divinity.

For Aristotle, the unchanging cosmos projects its white light on all the celestial spheres allowing the incredible spectacle “fire and light” of the nocturnal twinkling of the stars, the white light of the sun crosses the ether to come to radiate the earth of colors ; color, for the Greek philosopher, being a “corruption”, a degradation of the primordial white that has come to be damaged by diffusion, by diffraction, by refraction and by absorption, on objects, things, beings.

For the Chinese, spiritual Light is light of knowledge confirmed by the *ming* character that unifies the lights of the sun and the moon, synonymous with Enlightenment for Buddhists. In Islam, *En-Nûr* , the light is essentially identical to *Er-Rûh* , the Spirit, idem in Iran where, Zoroastrianism speaks of the consubstantiality of the spirit / light which ensures the final victory of the “Light of Glory” on the darkness. *The Mystery of the Golden Flower* , a Taoist text, considers that the Essence of life is contained in the Light of the heart and which must be continuously circulated within the body.

The Tibetans speak of the common origin of the world and of man in the form of a myth which tells that from a Light emanating from the Primordial Void was generated an Egg, from which burst the white light of the Universe which in turn engendered an Egg from which the Primordial Man emerged. Finally, *The Tibetan Book of Death* speaks of it as the light of a “Pure Truth” where the deceased will have to choose between the brilliant light of Wisdom or the dull white light of the *devas* , impure light that perpetuates the cycle of reincarnations and means the return to earth. (Chevalier / Gheerbrant, *Dictionary of Symbols*, 1982. Eliade Mircea, *Méphistophélès et l'androgyne*, 1962)

This identification of Light with the consciousness of being is also taken up in the Old Testament. In Genesis, the *Fiat Lux* !, “Let there be light!” is the symbolic interpretation of the Illumination of the world, ordinance of chaos. According to the Vulgate, Latin translation of the *Bible* approved in 1546 at the Council of Trent, Adam and Eve were tempted by Lucifer which in Latin means “bearer of Light”, that is to say bearer of the knowledge of good and evil, carrier of the consciousness of being. When Moses returned from Mount Sinai, his face was so bright that the people were afraid.

Thus the *New Testament* often mentions that we are “children of the Light” meaning that we have in addition to a biological origin, a spiritual lineage revealed by the illumination of the baptism of fire initiated by the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this metaphor of light as “full of the Absolute” will be Teilhard de Chardin's favorite. From the “universal focus” radiates the “celestial light” which penetrates the “crystal of beings” because it is again in the way in which the ray penetrates the crystal that God becomes “universally tangible and active” “thanks to the immense layers. of the created. “ (Pantheism, Action, Omega, p.30)

It is therefore universally recognized from prehistory to the present day that the mystically perceived Light is synonymous with transcendence of the terrestrial world and immanence of absolute freedom contained in supreme knowledge, as the sign of the revelation of the ultimate Reality. The nature of this otherworld, despite cultural and religious differences, calls into question the structure of the Universe as perceived before. The experiences of light are at the heart of great spiritual revelations as much as of great scientific discoveries.

This mystique of light from ancient time after the intuitive knowledge of the contemplative is echoed in the beginning of the XXth century in modern physics where we discover that the electron is well and good bearer of light; that he can remain wisely in his paradise in the heart of the antineutron or else take action, disobey and leave his Eden by the disintegration of the antineutron. (Charron) It is through this act of “rebellion” that the electron begins to “exist” and to increase its luminous flux. This electron charged with light thus becomes the motor of all cosmic evolution, of matter and of life, and finally, bearer of knowledge, of memory, and therefore of Spirit. Thus the paradox of light as a corpuscular wave of modern physics refers to the paradox of God, transcendent and immanent at the same time. This “interior Light which dwells in us”, this “golden flower” is now perceived as much by the mystic as the atheist physicist or the contemporary artist.

Also metaphysically, what Malevich brings to light, it is the case to say it, is that the different gods (animism, polytheism, monotheism) of the different cultures are only varied analogical modalities for reaching the One; like the different colors of the spectrum which all converge towards white as demonstrated by Newton (1669) with the theory of the composition of white light. One is not by a number but the unity of numbers, it belongs to the same mystery as light. Each number carries in its essence the primordial unity. Thus each religious universe manifests the Absolute according to its own laws and sacred rites.

The perceptible exterior forms (exo) are symbols opening onto the interior dimension (eso) of everything, from the atom to the galaxies. Thus, the exterior multiplicity communicates with the interior unity. The meeting in the white of the multiple colors foreshadows the order and the ultimate beauty that Buddhists call the “Clear Light” called the “Universal Void”. This clear and pure light symbolizes the state of Buddha through which the awareness of the universal void was revealed, Emptiness (*shunyata*) sort of “instantaneous illumination” of the divine Essence related to the *kouwa* (Him) of the Muslim Sufis or the *Ein Sof* of the Jewish Kabbalists. One might wonder if modern science has not been influenced by this old mythology too: the big bang is often represented by a burst of white light. So when Malevich painted his famous White Square at the beginning of the 20th century, the art of divine representation since the Paleolithic

reached its entelechy, that is to say the point of completion of any concept, its apogee.

From time immemorial, man has made representations of gods as well as representations of the world which are constantly renewed through historical events, cultural developments and scientific knowledge. In fact, as Schopenhauer declares, “the world is my representation”, an affirmation confirmed by Heisenberg and his principle of uncertainty and transposed into art in this declaration by Duchamp : “the viewer makes the picture”.

Malevich puts an end to the old and legendary debate between theorists and painters on the primacy of the line over color and vice versa.

“Malevich frees painting from any legibility or visibility which does not belong to his own means: it is the supremacy of the color plane”, an art “without object”, “alogic.” (Frédéric Valabréque, Malevitch in *Le siècle rebelle*, Editions Larousse, Paris 1999, p.367)

Its fusion of white, symbol of the divine, square, symbol of man; White square on white background, shows the creation of man (straight line) merging with the divine creation (white color) to form one and the same entity.

“The simple line and its development according to the strict geometric legality were to offer men worried by the confusion and obscurity of phenomena the greatest capacity for happiness. For here the last traces of a connection with life and of a dependence on it are erased; here are reached the absolute and supreme form, the purest abstraction; here is the law, here is necessity, when everywhere else reigns the arbitrariness of the organic. But no natural object can serve as a model for such an abstraction. “The geometric line is distinguished precisely in this from the natural object that it does not belong to the context of nature [...]” (Worringer)

Indeed, why Malevich chooses a square rather than the circle ? Undeniably, the square of Malevich reconnects with the sacred dimension of the primitive art of the line. Through the line, the mind opens up to mystery, to the abstract representation of a magical order. First ornamental, the scarification line on the skin of men and women, from prehistoric times, wants to show both the membership of a member to a group, his social rank, his personal totem and his relationship with the divine. The primitive tattoo is the art of spiritual language and the eye, receptacle of spiritual waves materialized thanks to the light, conveys to the brain the collected perceptions that the thought orders in knowledge then in traditions. Creative thinking promotes understanding of symbols. Since Archaic times, the circle represents the visible world : circle of the sun, the moon, roundness of the iris etc. At the time, it was not a geometric sign but a sacred symbol which oriented the mystical perception of celestial phenomena and enigmatic con-

structions of the natural world towards the search for a “presence” which manages the harmony of this Universe. The circle is therefore the bearer of a natural magical power which man, as an affirmation of his own creative power, invented the square as a symbol of the power of culture. Thus for Malevich, the square is the primary atom of human creativity, therefore the basis of geometric suprematism.

“From the male and the female, make a circle,
then from there a square and then a triangle ;
make a circle and you will have the Stone of the Philosophers ”.
(engraving attributed to Mérian)

“The seat of human constructions, it is (the square), according to a practical and realistic vision, the first rationally inhabitable figure. (...) The square evokes stability, but this does not exclude dynamism. Its space offers, in fact, multiple resources. (...) The four equal sides of the square face the four orients of the World. With it, man has the feeling of leaning on the Universe. (...) While the circle forms the undifferentiated whole, the square expression of the FOUR, is the symbolic manifestation of the accomplishment of the whole. “ The symbolism of the square and that of the number four (...) merge. The tetrad, number of the square, passes for the perfect number: it is that of the letters of the divine Name. The Hebrews made the Tetragrammaton (JHVH) the unpronounceable Name of the Godhead. (Roger Begey, *The squaring of the circle and its metamorphoses*, Editions du Rocher, 1993, p.61)

The square does not exist in nature on a human scale, incomprehensible even unthinkable for our primitive ancestors. It will begin to reveal itself at the origin of civilization with the Mesopotamian ziggurats and the Egyptian pyramids because there are no pyramids with a triangular base despite appearances. The ancient pyramids have a square base. These are superimposed squares narrowing down to just a point. In Roman times, Vitruvius, architect and engineer in the first century BC, wanted to inscribe the human body in perfect geometry. He concludes that a man with arms and legs apart, could be inscribed in the same way in the perfect geometric figures of the circle (*homo ad circulum*) and the square (*homo ad quadratum*).

“The center of the human body is also by nature the navel; in fact, if we lay a man on his back, hands and legs apart, and point a compass at his navel, we will touch tangentially, describing a circle, the tips of the fingers of both hands and of his toes. But that is not all: just as the figure of the circumference is realized in the body, so we will discover the diagram of the square. in fact the measurement is taken of a man from the soles of the feet to the top of the head and that this measurement is transferred to the line defined by his outstretched hands, the width will be found to be equal to the height, as on the square areas squared “. (Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, III, 1, 3)

During the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci will take again the calculations of Vitruvius and will compose the sketch of the famous drawing on the rules of human proportion. The square is a human invention, rather a human intuition finally “seen” naturally and demonstrated several centuries later thanks to the microscope since many minerals crystallize in the shape of a cube.

Malevich, faced with the spiritual apprehension of space, aware of the unfathomable disorder of life, rushes towards the transcendence of all representations to bring art closer to its absolute value. His suprematist theories, formalized with the help of the Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, were first published in brochures under the title “ *The World Without Substance* “. The Russian painter Malevich reached the summit of creative intuition by accomplishing the ultimate work, that is to say, being able to represent the Absolute that man has artistically sought to transcribe since the age of the caves. When Malevich painted his *White Square on a White Background* (1918), the history of sacred art based on representation seemed to come to an end. The *White Square* is the farewell of representation, the radical renunciation of any plastic figuration because, as Mallarmé said, “the Infinite is finally fixed” Abstract art rubs shoulders with “the very rumor of the cosmos”, “the luminous milk trails” of the Milky Way and “the jumble of shadows” of interstellar spaces. (Georges Duthuit)

Abstract art aptly represents this drive towards “more sophisticated levels of complexity.” Trained by modern mathematics and “quantum states”, informal art is part of the observation of a radically “revolutionary” new reality. The world of art is the world of the mind .

But beware, it would be wrong to claim that the abstract artists of that time rationally integrated scientific discoveries into their work. The *Color and Culture* by John Gage, a masterful study of the great color theorists from Plato and Aristotle to the suprematism of Malevich and the minimalism of the 1950s through Newton, Goethe and Schopenhauer demonstrates the opposite. Each era has specific “visual assets”. Thus Antiquity and the Renaissance are characterized by a pragmatic approach where artists establish close links with science which remains the main influence. We too often forget that the Enlightenment intelligentsia of previous centuries developed alongside its rationalism a mystical consciousness which drew heavily on the esoteric heritage of the previous centuries; one thinks of course of Hermeticism, of the Jewish Kabbalah, of Germanic illuminism, of English Freemasonry. Indeed, all these mystical currents have metaphysical roots close to the religions of salvation which favored the blossoming of the romantic utopia of the advent of a more beautiful and better world, more noble and pure under the aegis of the visionary artist of a new universal order.

Artists and theorists worked to establish the foundations of a “science of color”, let us think of Signac, father of divisionism, of Seurat’s

pointillism, of Delaunay who applies the theory of simultaneous contrasts, a sort of luminous alphabet, of color, to Kandinsky's painting with its rhythm as in music, its grammar and punctuation as in linguistics, to Mondrian who wants to define a primary chromatic map in relation to the laws of geometry, but all these rational positions are also supported by an esoteric discourse which aims at nothing less than the acquisition of knowledge through art as a supra-sensory experience of the new world. and to match this empirical knowledge with scientific breakthroughs such as the theory of light developed by Einstein's relativity and Planck's quantum mechanics

In parallel with "the science of color" a sociology of art emitted by the Russian-Polish painter Wladyslaw Strzeminski emerged. Too often, art historians, so focused on their subject of study, have been unable to relate, rather to understand that art formed one of the essential paths of knowledge of an era in the same way as science, theology, sociology and politics. Hence the manifest incomprehension of the population in general towards contemporary art. It will be up to Wladyslaw Strzeminski to undertake the study of these interactions and to identify an original concept.

In this study, the painter analyzes the historical evolution of art in relation to the progression of the "visual achievements" of each society. These visual achievements (unism) form a true symbiosis of cultural customs and traditions, scientific knowledge, optical laws and perceptual intuitions and even mythical illusions of a given society at a specific time. As Strzeminski specifies, the conditions in which man lives oblige him to perceive a certain quantity of visual phenomena.

The plastic form characteristic of each epoch develops from the visual achievements then reached, we then speak of syncretism between different objective and subjective interactions just as the interaction between the different waves transforms visible light into organized light, that is to say - say in colors. Since the same process is also identifiable in the perception and organization of sounds, we can therefore speak of conceptual achievements common to the arts in general. Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) began the real revolution in the history of music by proposing to replace the seven notes of the scale by twelve semitones. His musical system called "dodecaphonism" introduces an equally radical break for Western thought as Malevich's *White Square*. Schoenberg rejected the traditional tonality in music in the same way that Kandinsky, Mondrian and Malevich broke the rules of pictorial composition in force for centuries. All four, each in his field of interest, invented a new language considered scandalous by the purists and aroused general incomprehension in the population as well as the new quantum equations. For Kandinsky, "the pictorial and musical dissonance 'of today' is nothing other than the consonance of 'tomorrow'.

In short, all the great discoveries trigger a common analytical process

and develop an identical state of mind expressed as much in science, in music as in visual art. At the same time, around 1906, the philosopher Husserl in his *Logical Research* argued that "pure general concepts" such as words, numbers, spatial figures, colors, are in themselves fragmentary, but the interaction of the concepts between them leads to an "ontology", to a unity. Each concept with its particular "grammar" are the constitutive and inseparable elements of a single equation, the synthesis of which is man at a precise time and place in his history and his culture. Thus the state of mind visible at the beginning of XXth century set in motion a process of synthesis, still present today, old disparate elements considered one thinks electronic music sampling and synthesis "world beat".

Harmony and unity were the leitmotifs of the time as much in science, in literature as in plastic arts. These and other concepts became the basis of Strzeminski's chromatic research, which the artist called "unism." A pupil of Kazimir Malevich in Moscow during the beginnings of the Russian Revolution, then a theorist, essayist and artist, Wladyslaw Strzeminski (1893-1952) proposed unism as an extension of supremacist theories towards an optical unity devoid of contrast but obtained by a play on matter.

The painting of homogeneous appearance is made of the successive accumulation of small cells formed by the imprint of some instrument in the very material of the painting. His touch made of a multitude of small dots evokes a pointillist abstraction. At the base of unism therefore rests the principle of total homogeneity of the image, which is governed by its own laws, and constitutes an optical unit devoid of any contrast. According to Strzeminski, two colors which collide destroy, by their contrast, the unity of the painting because they divide it into as many parts as there is opposition. The greater the contrast of colors, the more violent the pictorial conflicts, so the painting finds itself irreversibly divided by the clashes of colors resulting in an amplification of the dramatic tension of the pictorial form.

Even if the unism names a pictorial style, the term is however quite adequate to designate the philosophical concept of research of unity and harmony set in motion since ancient Greece. We think of Parmenides and his poem *De la Nature* which testifies to a metaphysical search for unity : "being achieves perfection, it is this mass mass like a harmoniously round sphere which everywhere also deviates from its center. . For it is necessary that being should be neither greater here nor less there. From the center to its extreme completion radiates its homogeneous being, sovereignly. »(Fragment 15) Then emerges the eastern paradox of unity in multiplicity (yin-yang) coupled with the western paradox of unity versus complexity. Since the Big Bang theory marking the appearance of creative disorder, the universe now seems to have an origin which justifies the search for a concept of unification and order existing before the initial explosion. This strongly felt need for unity propels contemporary physics

towards the writing of a “single fundamental equation from which derive the properties of all elementary particles and hence the behavior of matter in general.” (Heidderger)

Painters and writers were therefore increasingly interested in science to the point of triggering Valéry’s great project of uniting scientific creation and aesthetic creation in a single synthesis. So much so that the commitment of intellectuals to the search for unity between reason and intuition affected all spheres of knowledge, including mathematics of course. “Mathematics, normally recognized for its positive, rigorous and precise character, is often a poetic work creating a universe of imagination; and poetry, normally loved for its playful spontaneity and supreme ineffectiveness, becomes a mathematical demiurge who assembles words and images to build a highly factual universe.” (Scott Buchanan, Poetry and Mathematics cited in www.paulbraffort.net/science_literature , ch.3)

Thousands of kilometers from the European continent, the Mauritian poet Malcolm de Chazal also put forward the concept of unism. He arrived at this observation by studying the human face. Explaining his theory, Chazal said “the breakthrough came only when I began to analyze the human face in depth. Immediately I perceived that all the parts of the face were connected, fit together, were interrelated and inseparable from each other.” (Sens-plastic, p.312)

And the poet Saint-John Perse concludes with these words : “In truth, all creation of the mind is first of all “poetic” in the proper sense of the word; and in the equivalence of sensible and spiritual forms, the same function is exerted, initially, for the enterprise of the scientist and for that of the poet. Discursive thought and the poetic ellipse, which goes further, and further? And of that original night where two born blind men grope, one equipped with scientific tools, the other assisted only by the flashes of intuition, which therefore rises earlier, and more charged with brief phosphorescence? The answer does not matter. The mystery is common.” (cited in www.paulbraffort.net/science_literature , ch. 5)

So we support that ultimately it is the syncretism between reason (science) and intuition (philosophy) to the search for unity which is the main characteristic of abstraction proposed by the artists of the XXth century which represents monochrome the climax and the ultimate threshold. Scientific discoveries were integrated into abstract art and the latter thus injected in return a little “poetic mysticism” into science as if the artist had discovered a metaphysics hidden behind the equations.

Announced as “final liberation”, the abstraction is intended to be a manifestation of “pure nature”, almost atomist in the sense that it designates not a real object but an idea, a product of the mind or according to Kant’s formula : “ The beautiful is that which pleases

universally and without concept “ . Beauty does not need an object at the limit since it is sensation, a “vibration of the soul,” said Kandinsky. Russian art, mainly that of icons centered on the allegorical power of “making the invisible visible”, has always been at the center of the metaphysical research of Russian avant-garde artists. Moreover, Malevich hastened to qualify his supremacist paintings as “icons of our time” in front of which the spectator knows the last “moment of truth”, irradiated by the spiritual energy which emerges from them. This is the ultimate point to which art could aspire in the effort to achieve the timeless, in its transcendent quest for the unlimited.

The white monochrome as the ultimate abstract icon is pure energy where the inexpressible is contemplated in its purity. The aesthetic interpretation of Malevich’s White Square would be one of the most important matrices in the pictorial tradition for understanding and above all feeling the sublime. The abstract image ceases to be a representation to become an aesthetic ; it no longer copies reality, it symbolizes it, hence the suprematism “namely the supremacy of strictly pictorial means - colors and shapes - over simple representations of the visible world of appearances”, a “supremacy of pure sensation” capable of make perceptible the “solemnity of the universe” in which the opposition between man and nature, spirit and matter is abolished. (Karl Ruhrberg, Art in the XXth century, p.163-164)

The gaze meets the soul and succeeds where words have failed ; the inexplicable is revealed by clarity, silent illumination. Monochrome represents for painting its ultimate threshold and constitutes a point that one can no longer cross ; it is Planck’s wall of quantum physics transposed into abstract art. Indeed, it is up to the famous German physicist Planck to point out that science is incapable of knowing what happened before 10^{-43} seconds during the initial big bang since gravity raises an insurmountable wall to any rational investigation. Beyond the “Planck wall” is the total mystery. Beyond this wall hides an unimaginable reality. Monochrome thus reveals just as much as it hides the same ultimate secret.

“The essence of Everything is a secret in a secret, the secret of something that remains veiled, a secret that only another secret can teach; it is a secret about a secret that is veiled by a secret.” (anonymous)

With *Carré blanc sur fond blanc* , art rediscovers the “primitive” mystique of pure feeling, a sort of illumination in transparency. The colors, the form, the objects, the beings are not denied on the contrary but reach their “existential” finality in their fusion with the transparent Whole. (The square and the background, both white, are distinguished by the application of brushstrokes. The light playing on the textures, the figure and the background are differentiated by their

tonality. This differentiation in the shades of white makes *Square white on a white background* is not a pure monochrome but most art historians agree in attributing the authorship of the monochrome to Malevich)

Malevich could not go further - for him painting reached its peak - at the age of forty, he stopped painting but art remained and the artist then redirected his career towards constructivist architecture.

Malevich's monochrome raises many questions about the relationship between scientific concepts and art but also involves its part of teaching. So when it came out, Malevich's canvas created a scandal, it represented nothing, it was an empty space hung on an empty wall, a void interpenetrating a void. He had just completed three thousand years of scientific research since Hesiod first emitted the hypothesis of the Origin of the world from a vacuum. Today, in fact, quantum physics puts into equations the spontaneous emergence of the Universe from the fluctuations of the Void and also demonstrates, paradoxically, that the interstellar cosmic void despite the appearances of the "empty canvas" - n ' let us not forget that the painter's canvas is woven from millions of billions of atoms - is nevertheless filled with an infinite energy coming from a dark matter, which Enrico Fermi called neutrinos, a proposition which exactly matches Malevich's vision. This fullness without words, without form, nor color - white is a non-color - is inscribed in a continual interrelation with the quantum environment so that the work is never identical but always in becoming like the Universe, until proven otherwise, continuously expanding.

Le *Carré blanc* is faithful to paradoxical logic in that it leads us to consider white, light both material and immaterial, as the only possible attempt to concretely represent the supreme abstraction. The *White Square* by Malevich can be watched in any direction, there is neither up nor down, neither right nor left, no sense was predetermined, nor perspective, according to the axiom that " 'Universe has no ceiling, no floor, no foundation, no horizon'. Paradoxical thought obliges, would the extreme abstraction of the *White Square* be at the same time, the most realistic of all paintings ? As if reality, reason and abstraction, intuition are essentially delivering the same message.

In response to the *White Square*, Rodtchenko in ideological opposition to Malevich paints the *Black Square on black*, a real black hole in contemporary art. Subsequently, Malevich's *white square on white background* will be regularly splashed with persistent black spots, let's think of Borduas, Hartung and subsequently completely destroyed by Ad Reinhardt's monochrome black on black. Why such an aesthetic and philosophical shift in such a short time ?

Aside : Light loses all of its energy trying to break out of a black hole's potential well . However, it was not until the beginning of the 20th century with the advent of general relativity by Albert Einstein that the concept of the black hole became more than a curiosity. In astrophysics , a black hole is a massive object whose gravitational field is so intense that it prevents any form of matter or radiation from escaping. Such objects therefore do not emit light and are therefore black . From this characteristic comes the adjective " black " , since a black hole cannot emit light. What is valid for light is also valid for matter : no particle can escape from a black hole once captured by it, hence the very appropriate term " hole ". The material that is caught by a black hole is heated to considerable temperatures before being swallowed up, also known as an " occluded star." »This indeed stipulates that a rotating body will have a tendency to« drag »space-time in its vicinity. (source wikipedia.org)

Black romanticism

Like an eternal silence with no future or hope sounds black inside. (Kandinsky)

From the depths of the Paleolithic, the darkness and the dangers that lurk there - wild beasts, enemies, storms, evil spirits, torment and death - have been deeply inscribed in human consciousness. Universally, the black color evokes the destruction and the disorder necessary for the appearance of life but also, the dark part of the soul of each of us. We speak of "black heart" to designate a dark and vulgar nature.

In the 1930s, the Italian writer and art historian Mario Praz (1896-1982) highlighted for the first time the black side of Romanticism, thus designating a vast section of artistic creation which, from the years 1760-1770, exploits the dark side, excess and irrationality that is hidden behind the apparent triumph of the enlightenment of science.

This universe was constructed at the end of the 18th century in England in Gothic novels, a literature which seduced the public with its taste for mystery and the macabre. The visual arts quickly follow suit: the terrible or grotesque universes of many painters, engravers and sculptors from all over Europe compete with those of writers: Goya and Géricault confront us with the absurd atrocities of wars and shipwrecks of their time, Füssli and Delacroix embody the specters, witches and demons of Milton, Shakespeare and Goethe, while CD Friedrich and Carl Blechen project the audience into enigmatic and funereal landscapes, in the image of their destiny.

From the 1880s, noting the vanity and ambiguity of the notion of progress, many artists took up the heritage of black romanticism by turning to the occult, reviving myths and exploiting discoveries about

dreams, to confront man with his terrors and contradictions: the savagery and perversity hidden in every human being, the risk of collective degeneration, the agonizing strangeness of everyday life revealed by the fantastic tales of Poe or Barbey d'Aurévilly. In the midst of the second industrial revolution, the hordes of witches, sneering skeletons, shapeless demons, lustful satans, fatal magicians... which reflect a provocative and festive disenchantment with the present are thus resurfacing.

When, in the aftermath of the First World War, the surrealists made the unconscious, dreams and drunkenness the foundations of artistic creation, they completed the triumph of the imaginary over the principle of reality, and thus, the very spirit of black romanticism. At the same time, the cinema takes hold of Frankenstein, Faust and the other masterpieces of black romanticism which is firmly established in the collective imagination.

The men of action had had their day. In a society where strength of soul, wit and sensitivity had been promoted to the rank of modern qualities, classical heroes such as Achilles and Hercules had lost their status as identifying figures. French art from the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 19th century bears witness to the extent of the crisis of the traditional hero and the search for substitute models. In 1802, François René de Chateaubriand started with his *Genius of Christianity* a movement which was to draw from the Christian religion a large number of subjects. His source of inspiration, however, would extend far beyond biblical scenes: writers and artists

are indeed interested in catacombs, cemeteries, burials, shipwrecks, martyrs and orphans. They discovered in them a new beauty, which was lacking in the ancient previously carried to the skies. Dante's *Divine Comedy* had a lively success with its inferno peopled with somber figures; Shakespeare's dramas

that Voltaire had still described as barbarians and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* became unavoidable, while Goethe with his *Faust* revealed himself in direct contact with his time (...) in his preface by *Cromwell*, considered as a manifesto of the romanticism, Hugo challenges the beautiful ideal his right to exclusivity as an object of great art. The modern muse sees, according to him, that "the ugly (..) exists next to the beautiful, the deformed near the graceful, the grotesque on the other side of the sublime, evil with good.

The viewer, at a safe distance and at a safe distance, enjoys watching the work while shuddering with horror at the sight of the smallness of the human being in the face of the grandeur of nature. The shipwreck, a simple landscape embellished with figures, takes on a monumental and historical dimension

in *Le radeau de la Méduse*. Due to the hope that arouses a ship barely visible on the horizon, the scene suggests a less fatal outcome. The thoughtful air and the melancholy pose of the man holding his dead son with one arm suggest, however, the random nature of a rescue which will arrive too late for almost all the castaways piled up on the raft. Géricault transforms here the act by which the classic hero accomplishes himself, that is to say the heroic act constant in braving death, into a conjunction of efforts consisting in attracting attention.



It is paradoxical that the men crammed into a pyramid in the right half of the canvas almost all turn their backs on the viewer as they hope to be seen and scramble for that goal on which their lives depend. It is tempting to bring this scene, and in particular the management of the gaze, closer to the situation of the young painter, who hoped by this painting for a first success at the salon and thus hoped to break through as an artist.

Madness is one of the favorite themes of romanticism. For female figures, this valorization found its paroxysm in a model of femininity, that of the holy martyr. Witness the romantic interpretations of the figure of Ophelia by Shakespeare, starting with that of the actress Harriet Smithon in a performance of Hamlet given in 1827 in Paris. It is indeed this representation that for the first time brought Ophelia's madness to the fore and presented her death in the river as a "beautiful death". In previous French adaptations of the text no importance had been given to Hamlet's beloved. Delacroix who had attended the premiere of the play in Paris in 1827 established the death of Ophélie as an independent subject of painting. In this one Ophelia appears like a martyr on earth, who finds deliverance in nature since - by a secularized form of immortality - she becomes water again, this "sad" element considered as feminine. (...) Edgar Allan Poe (Genesis d (a poem in Grotesque and Serious Stories) states that "the death of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetic subject in the world."

Expressionism is the cry of solitary men in this "rotten West" by machinist civilization. Ancestors, let's name Munch, Ensor, Nolde but also a fascination for Rimbaud, Hölderlin, Nietzsche and Dostoïevski. Profound transformations are shaking Europe, brutal industrialization and the rural exodus make cities grow in a dazzling way with its cohorts of unemployed. Everything becomes problematic: the technique is scary, the administration scares, hatred scares. Flee cursed civilization like their contemporary Gauguin and Rimbaud before. We can, in the case of the first Viennese expressionists Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele, for example, underline that these two painters were first trained in the drawing school, dominant in Vienna, and learned to liberate colors in contact with moderns. French: influenced by Cézanne, the Impressionists and the Post-Impressionists. Klimt's style is a prominent example of this synthesis of the neoclassical school of drawing and Post-Impressionism. Neither Schiele nor Kokoschka will succeed in completely emancipating the color of the outlines and, from the interwar period, Kokoschka will restore the primacy of drawing over color. Because the drawing became an expression of contradictory feelings in the image of European society.

The sociologist Le Rider will observe that the end of the XIXth century corresponds to the appearance of "the chronic crisis of identity", questions of identity of expressionist artists which will

subsequently win over all individuals, a movement which will span the entire following century. till today. Feelings such as inner turmoil, anguish, guilt, agony, distress will be used to speak of the decline of a dying society and to describe personal unease and civilizational failure since classical Greece. The quest for oneself staging personal dilemmas in the face of the ambient cacophony is at the heart of the process of individuation underway. Nietzsche spoke of a "savage existential anger" that ran through the entire artistic revolution of the twentieth century.

The desire for revolution giving new meaning to life materialized in the "passion to be oneself". The mood of the time is for anarchy. It begins with Fichte and the German romantics, with the affirmation of an autonomous subject and absolutely free to self-create: "With the free being, conscious of oneself, a whole world appears at the same time - starting from the nothing". Historian Hubert van den Berg first reminds us that in Europe, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, anarchism was a powerful political current which competed with the social democratic parties. The writings of anarchists enjoyed an important audience in European intellectual circles. There was therefore a climate conducive to the emergence of a new movement which would inseparably combine political revolt and artistic expression of a new order. (Laurent Margantin)

It is in this social and political atmosphere that the protest against the expressionist movement arises. The links between expressionists and anarchists were numerous. It should be noted from the outset that German Expressionism was never a school like French Symbolism or a structured group like Italian Futurism or Russian Constructivism. Expressionism is an idealistic, romantic movement that will serve as an energy catalyst for a youth in turmoil fighting the chaotic brutality of the world. Expressionism is above all a contestation of the world carried by common themes as much in painting, theater, literature as in poetry centered around the urban man petrified in frightening cities where the craziest despair arouses an irrational hope. imbued with idealism and mysticism embodied in anarchy.

Without God or master, expressionism is above all an attitude of revolt, the cry (Munch) of despair of a whole youth living in the "cancer huts" that the cities have become. "Sick dwellings" (Wolfenstein), "evil city" (Salus), "sprawling cities" (Verhaeren). Cities are the bloody theater of the contemporary apocalypse. The cities driven by savage liberalism and unrestrained industrialization offer the morbid spectacle of dilapidated districts with canals carrying refuse of all kinds where rotting human rags inhaling the stale air of chimneys spewing ash and death ; madness prowls everywhere.

Schelling said in The Ages of the World that "anguish is the fundamental feeling of every living creature." Man becomes

responsible for social decadence signs of his inner and existential ugliness. Expressionist artists were able to grasp the absurdity of our existence; they participated in his despair. Art then becomes “the last metaphysical revolt within nihilism”. (Benn) Like hallucinated poets with lyrical and incantatory pathos, they did not hesitate to represent the dramas of life and to express their pain in their work. Pacifism is one of the major themes of expressionist artists and poets. Everyone saw the First World War as a real apocalypse, the collapse of European culture into barbarism.

Both the attraction of the picturesque over the decadent, the attraction of spontaneity instead of constraint, the artists also participate in this great movement of emancipation, including Kirchner, who thus wrote the expressionist program for the 1906 exhibition : “Having faith in a new generation of creators and enjoyers, we call on all the youth to come together as bearers of the future”. Inspired by the garish colors of unrelated Fauvism, the expressionist artist attempts to express the psychological tensions experienced by youth in the face of the world.

This foreboding is linked to the awareness of decline and death and finds its release in the expectation of a new man; the deepest despair rubs shoulders with the highest messianism. From a palette of colors in violent contrasts emerge helpless human figures linked to the social tensions of the time. At the same time, synchronicity obliges, Sigmund Freud deepens, in the isolation of his office, the analysis of the neuroses that he observes in his patients like the expressionist paintings. Both expressionism and Freudian psychoanalysis highlighted the role of human drives, mainly the death drive heralding the unprecedented violence of the two world wars. In the middle of the last century, the post-atomic black destiny of men in turn splashed the white canvas (Borduas) until it was completely contaminated in the black on black of Reinhardt's *Ultimate Painting*. Thus was born abstract expressionism. (Pollock, Kline, Motherwell, de Kooning, etc.) All denounced the Auschwitz holocaust and the radioactive butchery of “Big boy” like thousands of honest people who lost their jobs and hundreds of others who lost their jobs. saw their careers shattered because they have not yet recovered from this apocalyptic sight of thousands of Japanese zombies being burnt to life. The European influence of white suprematism has come to juxtapose both in their minds and on the canvas, the “black star” of American abstract expressionism. Originally figurative paintings European Expressionists of the early XXth century had the torments of life in bodies and faces equally tormented. With the American abstract expressionism of the 1950s gradually under the effect of the ambient nihilism, the human disappeared from the paintings to leave only more and more fleeting traces of his upset soul.

Devastated by two world wars, shaken by incessant conflicts that affect the entire planet, marked by the appearance of new weapons of mass destruction and the rise of unprecedented forms of totalitarian

barbarism such as fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, the 20th century integrated deeply, and with gravity, the historical barbarism of Antiquity. Evil is omnipresent in human history : massive exterminations of peoples “doomed to the forbidden”, search for domination and racial or ethnic purity, slavery of the masses, enslavement of women as spoils of war and sexual object, forced labor of women, children, learned barbarism of weapons of mass destruction and chemical manipulations which increase the risks of *humanicide*. The biblical Nimrod is there to remind us : the disproportionate pride of the self-deified man in search of absolute power is our radical evil.

The resurgence of black coincides with the arrival of existentialist doubt which completely destroys the vitality and passionate impetus that characterized the utopian avant-garde. The color black and its splashes became the chromatic translation of the psychic upheavals of the nuclear age confronted with the absurdity of existence as an “eruption of materialistic darkness into the sphere of communication between eternal light and a creature seeking interior illumination.” (Riedl)

Regardless of styles, black “ color “ was the favorite color of American art in the 1950s and used repeatedly. There are historical precedents. In 1930, for example, Man Ray offered a black photograph to Robert Desnos. In 1936, Rodtchenko's *Black Square on Black Background* was reproduced in the catalog of the *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition, organized at MoMA by Alfred Barr; the *Black on White* Malevich there was also mentioned. As early as 1938, Hartung, the stateless German who had taken refuge in France, began to throw spurts of black paint on the canvas as a warning to us of the dark tragedy which would soon befall Europe. In February 1948, the first post-war exhibition of Matisse took place at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. She was showing many drawings in black ink that appeared to be done with a brush as large as a fist, in a slow motion. There was, then, the idea that the color black was the paint best representing the era of nuclear disarray. The use of black, its meteoric rise in art, a perfectly insignificant sign for the great systems of political interpretation other than marginalized anarchism, will on the contrary become a sign revealing the latent state of mind of the post-war generations. until our days.

The two great world wars demonstrated without trial the collapse of all progressive ideals, the collapse of the Nietzschean superman and superheroes, brutally revealing the self-destructive potential of Western societies, showing the defeat of humanism struck down as much by the corporatism of ‘State (Communist Russia) than private corporatism. (Capitalist West)

In short, the end of the Second World War represents a major turning point in the neurotic expression of collective fears : fear of

delinquents, fear of drugs, fear of communists, fear of anarchists, fear of atheists, finally by rummaging in the hidden corners. withdrawn from our collective unconscious, fear of the barbarian Christian yet civilized that we have become, capable of once again using the infernal energy of the evil atom against ourselves, against life.

As early as 1933 Hans Hartung had made himself the precursor of gestural painting. It gives the line the appearance of a psychic seismograph. For the first time, the drawing of a line is no longer drawn to the plastic equivalences of the real or the conceptual. The values ??underlined in this case are chance and the energy invested in the gestures of the artist handling the painting (hence the frequent name: gestural tachism). Such an art is distinguished from figurative expressionism in that in the latter the emotion of the artist is expressed through the subject first, while tachism claims to do so through the pictorial material alone. This gestural tachism crossed the Atlantic and became the cornerstone of the Quebec Automatist movement.

“Enigmatic, hermetic, no one to deliver us, we live our life impoesy without knowing how to breathe it.” (Gilbert Langevin)

In French America, the publication in 1948 of *Refus global* by the painter Borduas disturbed the peaceful tranquility of Montreal and the province of Quebec in general. Written by the painter Borduas and co-signed by about fifteen painters, sculptors, dancers and photographers, this anarco-artistico-political plea virulently denounces a sclerotic society: “refusal to turn a blind eye to the vices, the deceptions perpetrated under hatcheries Knowledge. (...) Refusal to serve, refusal of any intention, harmful weapon of reason. “In August 1948, a weekly covers the front page of the launch of the manifesto in these terms.” The Automatists announce the Christian decadence and prophesy the advent of the regime of instinct. All over the world, the “dictatorship of reason” is put in the dock. It is clear that the revolt is brewing, that the need for liberation is making its nest, that the foundations of the ideology of conservation are shaken.

The economic crisis of 1929-1932, the excesses of savage capitalism, the progression of fascism in Europe are the proofs of Western decadence. The German concentration camps of the Second World War, the Soviet gulags show that the political class has lost all consideration for the human being, which Hiroshima confirmed. Progress, scientism, rationalism and materialism, all concepts of modernity, are denounced and threaten the fundamental integrity of humans and of course French-Canadian society. “English liberalism marks the reign of managers and businessmen and liberal economics puts the fate of the community in the hands of a few speculators. “Imperialist” rationalism is responsible for having emptied the Christian religion of charity and its substance, to keep only a “code of alms.” All the values ??of true Christian humanism are then betrayed. The revolutionary act will not be carried out on the political scene by

the action of a group, but rather individually, by the grace of an “inner outpouring”, that the true artists in whom art is not degraded. to the rank of “art for old men and unoccupied rentiers”, know and reveal. This is why the situation demands a “total refusal” and a “revolutionary act.” ” (Robert Elie, “ Rupture ”, la Relève, February 1936) The table is set for Borduas and his *Refus global*, which is an exorcism of the fears that have paralyzed Quebec so much.

More and more, critics have noticed that since his stay in New York Borduas’ canvases have exploded as if he was trying to express “the entire American continent on the alert grappling with this explosive power of the atom. Borduas is a mystic who received the call of white, enlightenment. In less than five years, he emerged from the “Great Darkness” and came to rub shoulders with infinite whiteness. With his paintings “more and more white” such as *Shimmering* and *Hesitation* Borduas came even closer to the mystical radicalism of Malevich: “In these new monochromes, (sic) the color even in trace in the white, no longer has its place. Only the physical light playing on the reliefs of the paste somewhat animates the pure surfaces that these paintings have become. »More and more white backgrounds impose themselves with force, compromising even the existence of signs. (*The signs fly away*) “Although he does not make up his mind, one can wonder if the all-white painting, reduced to its only white background, did not already seem to him like the extreme limit that he proposed to himself. to achieve. “ (FM Gagnon, Borduas, p. 342, 452)

Quietly, Borduas frees himself from surrealist influences and is confronted with the use of black by American painters to emphasize the precariousness of the human condition. Suddenly the signs, the objects burst. (*Trophies of an ancient victory*) This notion of the atomized bursting of the object expressed by the chromatic duality of white and black is typical of the influence of American abstract expressionism on his work. It was by frequenting the painters of New York bohemia that Borduas understood that, ultimately, the dualism between good and evil, the unshakeable foundation on which rested the manifesto *Refus global* , can only be retransmitted aesthetically by the duality between the white and black. With *The Black Star*, probably his masterpiece, Borduas suddenly freed himself completely from surrealism, having kept from the automatism only the spontaneous way of applying paint on the canvas. *Composition 69* , this last lifelong painting characterized by extreme stripping is typical of abstract expressionism, to be compared to the work of Ad Reinhardt without the radical purity of its black monochrome. An American critic even going so far as to crown Borduas with the title of “the first Canadian abstract expressionist of international reputation. » (Gagnon, Borduas p.416)

“Armed with their complex detector, psychiatrists could always look

into our a-sociability. It was very strange that there were so many antisocials, so many paranoid people, that an epidemic of mental illness had suddenly descended on French youth. In this world where we had sought life, we had only found rubble. (...) Both of us strove to silence even the memories of our ancient hopes, to accept the ruins, to be happy in the ruins, to be ourselves ruins conscious and satisfied with themselves. »(Michel Mourre, *Despite the Blasphemy*, 1951)

But above all black, the color of mourning, really expresses the failure of humanist utopias which not only could not achieve their desire for liberation but could not prevent the slaughter not to mention the artists who wished and even participated, even to their defending body, to this carnage. The artists found themselves as guilty as the scientists who made the bomb. A form of disillusionment, of demobilization forced the artist to question the place of the creator in society.

The works in black from the post-war period are intended to be a confession of crime and become the ultimate chromatic expression of the great saga of human vexations. It then becomes useless or futile to be heard. The form will be obscure, silent towards the public, the work becomes a monologue, the artist expresses himself only for himself. This rupture between the artist and his audience gives his time its character of a broken, blinded world.

The atomic age, this horror supplement pulverized the human soul. The radical bankruptcy of humanism projected on the future of very dark drawings and this anguish felt by the artist was expressed in a destitution, an impoverishment of forms linked paradoxically to an ultimate, to an illusory will to live. As the bombs explode, the men implode. The hecatombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki interpose between man and the divine the Revelation of a total Evil.

The meaningless work gives meaning to its time, such is the paradox. Two major trends are thus emerging : the “color field”, painting of colored fields which gives primacy to color as the structure and subject of the painting, and “action painting”, a gesture of projecting paint on canvas.

Indeed, many artists have drastically reduced the color gamut or removed almost all valuable contrasts as the “signs flew away.” The Russian philosopher Berdiaef wrote that this search for a pure form, for a world without an object, is not unrelated to a religious mysticism; This is also a very good description of abstract expressionism and the minimalist art of the 1950s.

Robert Motherwell and Frank Kline consider that only black and white can describe the “global metamorphoses of life and death. Ad Reinhardt “entered” in the dark as one enters religion. Others had a passage there, often determining: Newman, Still, De Kooning, Kline, Rothko, Pollock, Motherwell, Rauschenberg, Stella and Borduas. Art

historian Irving Sandler described these black and white abstractions as evoking the “human condition as a dramatic conflict between opposing forces, which resolves into a precarious balance. “

De Kooning had been working on his black and white abstractions since 1946 and gradually turned towards an almost total black, whose work he exhibited in 1948. From now on his paintings reflect a reduction in pictorial means, reduction of the palette to black and white, choice of the least expensive possible materials (sapolin, sheets of paper mounted on canvas, etc.). De Kooning experiments in his positive-negative paintings all the erasure processes: scratching, covering, smearing, etc. De Kooning’s black paintings were immediately associated with a crisis of existentialist despair, which the artist has never denied. . With a black and white palette, Franz Kline zebra his canvas of signs reminiscent of oriental calligraphy.

Between 1950 and 1955, Kline did not stop painting and tried to reduce his language to the dynamics of gesture. His black and white paintings, works of major interest, seek balance in composition, through a range of nuances and non-academic signs. The freedom of creation which comes to him from the surrealists, then contributes to establishing in his work a certain correspondence between some of his paintings and oriental writing. The lines evoking strange, elegant and gigantic calligraphy, allow comparison. Tables are built from simple shapes. Its enormous black fringes on a white background also recall the steel structures of buildings. His passion for the city has never ceased to be one of his favorite themes.

Continuing on the path traced by Rodtchenko at the beginning of the century, Ad Reinhardt applies systematic, deep blacks to square canvases, “the last paintings that can be done.” “To the notion of monochrome is added” the monotony of a bourgeois society which is bored in the emerging suburbs to forget the catastrophe “remarks a critic. A man of great culture, attracted by Islam and the Orient, the artist’s ascetic approach is mainly spiritual based on a mystique of absence as evidenced by the series of *Ultimate Painting* , search for the last painting where materiality is reduced to the extreme. Monochrome represents a total break with the pictorial tradition dominated by drawing. One can consider the monochrome as an obligatory passage of the painting of the post-war years in search of a definition while the black “ color “ used seems to take on the tragic connotations of the mourning and the despair of the post-war world. .

Barnett Newman creates quite a shock by showing immense monochrome canvases crossed by vertical bands called “Zips”, reminding us of the intimate tears of being and of humanity. An assiduous reader of Jewish mystical texts and of the Kabbalah, he painted *Abraham* , a large vertical canvas, 210 x 88 cm, which appeared to be entirely black. Abraham, the spiritual father of the three largest monotheistic religions in the world, so-called religions of

love and brotherhood, disappears in the shame of failure. The religion of Latin *re-ligare*, (completely connected to its world) therefore marks the social bond between men and women. When this link becomes war, torture and extermination, religion loses all legitimacy.

Jackson Pollock, meanwhile, began producing black and white paintings in 1947. He inaugurated the technique of “dripping”, inspired by the technique of drawing on sand of the Navaro Indians, by involving himself with his whole body in a gesture. like a ritual that lets the paint flow onto the canvas placed on the ground, thus creating a web of interwoven lines. From this technique, Allan Kaprow deduces that painting is outdated and that it is the gesture that is creative. An event is pure creation, he thus invented the happening in 1959. Conceptual art will go further by affirming the primacy of thought over the work.

Rothko works on large canvases in very dark colors, with tendencies of browns, grays and vaporous blacks. To obtain these impressions, he applied two or three passes of dark colors on a colored base. Singularly, he wanted his paintings not to be too violently lit during their exhibition, but on the contrary that they emerge from the half-light as “expression of the fundamental human emotions - tragedy, ecstasy, fate”, “evocation of mortality. “

After having produced a series of white paintings, Rauschenberg began to cover newspaper collages with a thick layer of black color: that of occultation. The *Black Painting* Rauschenberg are not pure monochrome, since behind the black, “so beyond the wall paint, face life, that big events like the news items most innocuous, without hierarchy. Rauschenberg uses black, in a covering movement. It is no longer a question of covering with color, as is often the custom, but of covering collages, and in particular, newspaper collages. The black paint used has a weight. Darkness weighs on civilization but hope remains possible. It would be enough for the dark veil to be torn for this living, daily or heroic, trivial or artistic topicality, to invade all space.

Frank Stella painted twenty-three “black paintings” between 1958 and 1960, which are subdivided into two groups, with a rectilinear or diamond structure. The first category consists of a linear network, parallel to the edges of the painting, while in the second, it is inscribed obliquely. The structures are repetitive, always using the same formal scheme but according to different orientations. Frank Stella titles his paintings in very characteristic ways with Nazi slogans or moments of catastrophe. Before being an explanation of the work, the titles reveal the symptoms of the painter’s state of mind during this period. The artist is confronted with the failure of art as a scene of liberation putting an end to the romantic idea of ??the revolutionary imagination in the service of humanity.

Painting in black and white bears the mark of fire and ash on charred objects or bodies, it is to introduce disappearance into the work. This does not mean the end of art, nor of the plastic arts for all that, nor does it justify any negationism of art, despite the iconoclastic gesture of Rauschenberg who decides to erase with the eraser a drawing given by De Kooning, but reflects the most unimaginable historical disappearance. Not only six million Jews (and non-Jews, Gypsies, blacks, homosexuals) died, but with their bodies went up in smoke their name ; all traces and proof that they belonged to mankind have disappeared, as have those hundreds of thousands of Japanese whose bodies irradiated by the radioactive blast of the bomb disappeared from the face of the earth. Faced with Adorno’s assertion: “writing a poem after Auschwitz is an act of barbarism”, an assertion that denies art any contemporaneity, artists have chosen to show the unrepresentable by creating “pure optical situations” (Deleuze) illustrating the experience of catastrophe (genocide) and disappearance (holocaust) confronting humans.

The minimalist black monochrome as mystic of absence also plays on another register : the kenosis of the body like the crucified body of Christ which empties itself of its substance. With black monochrome, it is the world which empties itself of its substance, which slips towards its disappearance that Reinhardt describes as “black evanescences. “After Auschwitz and Hiroshima, we can only face a nihilistic kenosis :” the experience of fear is controlled by the frightening “said Brisson. (Michèle Katz and Jean-Louis Déotte, Art at the time of the disappearance)

Rauschenberg’s erasure tacitly demonstrated that modern art, mainly avant-garde, could not achieve the utopian solutions to the evils of this world that it had once promised. Art does not disappear in disappearance, it is rather the sublime that is dislodged from it, replaced by the impotence of existence. The atomic bomb promises a dead nothingness devoid of all possible. The black atom is to the modern world what the black plague (the Great Destroyer) was in the Middle Ages.

No colors anymore I want them to turn black... It’s not easy facing up when your whole world is black. (Paint it Black - Jagger / Richards)

The use of black pigment at the time of the greatest destruction shows the erasure of the traces of millions of disappeared who passed from life to death at the sole “good” of man in the German concentration camps, in the Soviet gulags, Latin American prisons, those in Eastern Europe and Red China. And hatred among humans is tenacious; contemporary disastrous manifestations are not lacking : Armenian genocide, massacre of Muslims by Christians in the former Yugoslavia, civil war between Hindu Tamils ??and Muslims, genocide in Cambodia, Rwanda and recently in Sudanese Darfur and Kenya. Each new genocide since 1945 grants a posthumous victory

to Hitler.

“Hitler and Stalin are not images of the past. They were from the future. They are the original emblem of our present; From our era; that of the deconstruction of man. »(Philippe Forget, Gilles Polycarpe, *The Mechanical Man*)

Faced with the bankruptcy of humanity, minimal art liquidates the historicity of Western art by offering no escape, mainly monochrome whose surface “empty of meaning” prohibits “mental projections and dreamlike wanderings of the spectator in front of an abyss. (Chalumeau) No identification must appear, everything must disappear, forms, perspectives, symbolic imagery; “This painting makes sense because it creates a void...” (Pleynet) It denies everything that the concept of art has traditionally been able to contain, it is elaborated on the modality of absence, of pictorial stripping. The more we refuse, the more we mean: “less is more” and “more is less”. This explains the numerous negative statements of the minimalists and their asymptotic logic, always almost illogical like *Howls in favor of Sade*, the film which “destroys the cinema” prophesied the situationist Guy Debord. Indeed, the film did not contain any images. The entire film took place on a black screen during moments of silence and on a white screen during dialogue. Work which is situated in negation and not in nothingness. If it rejects, denies, abolishes, it is to affirm something else ... that humanity is capable of disappearing through the ordeal that it inflicts on itself.

Continuing the work of purifying the image towards abstraction begun by Delaunay, Kandinsky and Malevich, *arte povera* or “minimal art” favors simple and sober forms that imply destitution, poverty and the simplicity of means. This is how Germano Celant, one of the representatives of “poor art”, proposes “to impoverish signs in order to reduce them to their archetypal dimension.

The void, the nothing, the invisible are part of works of art of which they constitute an essential dimension. Painting black becomes the stake of an asceticism and a sincerity absent from the diversity of colors. It is exploring the mysterious depth of the black hole in the cosmos, which absorbs light and can thereby become the inner revelation necessary for any resourcing. Black as an area of “pure possibility for a new beginning” was beautifully captured by Barnett Newman’s *Stations of the Cross* (1958-1966) series which ends in a dazzling, crisp white-on-white board, pure energy of dazzling light of illumination, a painting that is interpreted as an image of the possible transfiguration of the world.

“This is also the task that the artists decide to carry out, since for them it will also be a question of reconciling in their works the two contradictory outcomes of this new post-war consciousness: the

existential attempt to say the absurdity of the world or the craggy ethics to find meaning in it. No doubt the situation of man in the XXth century, destitute, amputated the world, stamped his destiny, is it unprecedented in history. In this context, his relationship to art will radically change, as Hegel prophesied in 1812 in his aesthetics course: “In general, in the development of each people, there comes a time when art is no longer enough. »(Jean-Louis Andral, in *Contemporary Art in France - All the plurals of the nothing and the singular* (<http://www.adpf.asso.fr>)

Pierre Soulages is the painter of black, or rather of light. His paintings (which he calls “beyond-black” or “black-light”) are a work on light: this strikes the black surfaces sometimes streaked or smoothed out of his canvases. It is the reflection of light on the surface states of this black color, surface states that vary and it is then reflected back to the eye of the beholder. This light reflection will therefore depend on the texture of the black and its reliefs. Initially the canvas is entirely black, and not white or red as is traditionally the case; painters traditionally covered their canvas with red, Nicolas Poussin, or gray, Goya for example before painting, in the case of Soulages, the areas of black cover the canvas, but he does not work with this pigment as bizarre as it may seem ; what interests him is the play of shadows, the abstract chiaroscuro of light; the eternal struggle of light against darkness.

“In my paintings, it is a reflected light, transformed and transmuted by black. What interests me is to explore the possible variations of the surface states of black. (...) I work with the light that reflects the surface finish of the color that I bring. I say multiple because these striations are not mechanical as in the case of the cubist comb where they are all similar - but there are striations which have different angles. If we compare each streak, there is a ridge and a groove, and the angle of each ridge is different, that is, there is a face, a tiny face, which reflects light differently; which means that we obtain an extremely varied light reflection because at each streak there is a different reflection.”

Source :

The angel of the bizarre. Dark romanticism from Goya to Max Ernst
<http://www.cineclubdecaen.com/peinture/expositions/angedubizarrelromantismenoir.htm>

The psychedelic rainbow

The 1960s marked the dazzling return of Dionysus and his liberating “happenings” imbued with eclectic music, fusion dances, amorous fraternities and peaceful solidarity. It is the Mediterranean invasion of America by Dionysus. As if by magic, the artist rediscovered the golden age of ancient Greece where the artist was the intermediary between man and the gods and felt invested with a mission, that of

thwarting the disaster announced by the horrors and disasters of this century, to fight against the capacity of reason to destroy itself. (Ribon)

“Dionysos is a hymn to life, Associated with the plant world and plant life, its popular festivals follow the agricultural calendar. It celebrates the manifestation of life in all its forms: water, blood, sperm: vitality to be. But his cult is contested and his followers sometimes persecuted by classical theologians loyal to the gods of Olympus. Dionysus disturbs, because he calls into question a whole system of values, the orthodoxy of a religious experience based on the absolute. With Dionysus, we sang, we drank the blessed wine, we walked, we put on make-up and taunted the “trapped” by processions of giant phalluses where we disguised ourselves as animals. The women, dressed in furs fawns, heads crowned with ivy, girdled with snakes, leave the houses for the mountains where we dance to the sounds of tympanums and flutes. We eat raw meat as before the discovery of fire, we gorge ourselves with blood in this celebrating the overcoming of the human condition not by the spontaneity of the acts like total deliverance of the famous moira, the destiny; men and women united in this dazzling deified orgy. Yes, Dionysos is indeed god of the theater and his disciples actors of their own lives. Euphoria and drunkenness anticipated the life of an orgasmic beyond. “Enough to make you want to die on the spot! (Eliade, History of beliefs and religious ideas I)

Art must reconnect with the sacred and this passage will take place thanks to the resurgence of timeless and archaic myths in modernity.



Faced with the political and technical domination of totalitarianisms, artists once again consider resorting to the primitive based on spontaneity as a means of slashing rationalist Western culture.

“The primitive was an integrated man whose thought was centered on the universe as a whole. (...) Creator of myths, phantasies and symbols, he had everything of a true artist, all the objects he created were real works. He knew how to party ... it was a question of entering into ecstasy and rediscovering the paradisiacal state of the fabulous time of beginnings.” (Maurice Demers and André Moreau, Québec Underground, t.III, p.88)

Lyrical abstraction, a movement dominated by Georges Mathieu and Hans Hartung, continues today. The speed, the improvisation, the spontaneity of the gesture, and the emotion of the moment characterize this movement. Lyrical abstraction is opposed to geometric abstraction, considered too cold, too rigorous and sometimes even boring. Forerunner of the happening and qualified by André Malraux as a “Western calligrapher”, Georges Mathieu defended an art freed from all classical rules. Mathieu was the first to abandon geometric lines in favor of lyrical impetus, imposing in the 1950s a new art of sign, color and light on very large canvases. this self-taught artist who claimed the invention of an

autonomous pictorial language pulverized the heritage of Mondrian and geometric abstraction by imposing a painting of pure speed and pure madness made of spots, Ripolin projections and curves applied directly with the tube on canvas placed horizontally. We have often overlooked the fact that the freedom of his gesture preceded that of Pollock, De Kooning or Kline.

Inspired by the tachism and lyrical abstraction of his friend Georges Mathieu, Riopelle creates a style of painting where he applies in thickness with a trowel large quantities of color on the canvas forming a constellation of small multicolored spots.

The neo-primitivism movement tried to take the references in the past from which it would be possible to build the future. Indeed, each era seeks to update what was previously known in its newly acquired cultural and technical specificity. Brut art (Dubuffet) freed from all conventions tried to reconnect with the freshness of children's graffiti while Cobra art, a synthesis between surrealism, primitivism and abstraction, brought to light a primitive bestiary of Dadaist monsters and masks. Another branch of lyrical abstraction is the Cobra group. In Brussels after the war, artists including the Danes Asger Jorn, Carl-Henning Pedersen, Henry Heerup, Egille Jacobsen, the Belgians Christian Dotremont, Joseph Noiret, the Dutch, Karel Appel, Constant, and Corneille, meet in the wish to realize their ideal of a better society, believing that creative expression could become a universal language. They reject the European rationalist culture whose decomposition the war has just demonstrated.

They seek in the artistic forms less contaminated by standards and conventions, the signs of primitive expressions: it is prehistoric art, medieval folk art, naive art, the creations of children or the mentally handicapped, writing, calligraphy, which for them is closest to the nature of the individual, his psyche and a subconscious closer to his deep authenticity.

So they undertake to seek all the irrational forms that can be expressed in art in all its forms, and in all its materials: drawing, painting, sculpture, wood, metal, earth, words, sounds, writing. At the origin of their artistic activity, therefore, is a political reflection generated by a revolutionary Marxist



analysis of society, and against any specialization of art: they are interested in the joint production of works of poems, drawings, paintings by opposing any stylistic or aesthetic formalism.

Classified in the United States as a continuation of abstract expressionism, also defined by the term "Action painting", CoBrA will be seen in France as an extension of surrealism, which we will call "Lyrical Abstraction".

This sympathy, not to say admiration for the tradition of the "barbarian" peoples of this land, the counter culture will be the breeding ground: Orientalism for the beatnik and shamanism for the hippie. Artistically speaking, it is a question of metamorphosing the simple natural impulses of the being into artistic improvisations: the creative act must be spontaneous like breathing. Automatic writing à la Ginsberg and "cutt off" à la Burroughs, novel written in one stroke like On the Road by Jack Kerouac, free jazz à la Charlie Parker, gestural painting without retouching à la Jackson Pollock, everything contributes to celebrate the "here and now" of our time on earth. Life is a "happening" and literature is the ideal medium of expression. The

four gospels, the four founding texts of the counter-culture will be Howl by Allen Ginsberg, On the road by Jack Kerouac, Le Festin nu by William Burroughs and Joyeuse Cosmologie by Alan Watts or The Doors of Perception by Aldous Huxley, c' is according to.

We then witness the blossoming of a mysticism of immanence which is inscribed in the horizontality of terrestrial life and no longer in the verticality of transcendence. An immanence therefore expressed through the ecstasy of the body, osmosis with nature, the cycle of life and death experienced on a daily basis; so many ways that lead to satori, to enlightenment here below. Psychedelic art is fundamentally neo-primitive downright Dionysian with the colors of the rainbow thrown on the

canvas by the painter / shaman. Without forgetting, of course, the marked return to the New Age tattoo.

Formerly, tattooing, scarifications and other bodily modifications corresponded to the animist magico-religious thought accompanying initiation rites and other commemorative ceremonies, then determined the social condition of the individual (leader, warrior, slave) and finally, this bodily aesthetics suggested a range of emotions ranging from sensuality to eroticism. The body marks are planetary and attested since the Neolithic period among the Celts, Eskimos, Egyptians, Japanese, Polynesians, Berbers, Bedouins, Arabs, Africans, Amerindians; rare are the peoples which are not marked.

The distinctive marks of a biological nature added to the cultural and psychological peculiarities which result from them form the races and the ethnic groups. Faced with this exponential demographic growth, the need quickly appeared to control these human beings and to regularize the dynamics and practices of community life. All kinds of collective constructions of individuals, clans, professions, classes, races and nations were thus formed, exponentially increasing the repertoire of distinctive signs.

But unlike the early arts of prehistoric art which were a sacred expression of the divine, this neo-primitivism is an expression of the human being, of his desires and his illusions. Like the totemic art of Prehistory which sought to build the individuality of being, neo-primitivist art, inspired by the rituals of tattooing and scarification of the skin of archaic societies, sought rather to deliver a message of authenticity closer to nature, against modern artifice. It is in fact a question of giving back to the body a personal identity to the detriment of the strictly functional conception of the organs. Thus the body becomes the staging of the expression if not of the exploration of oneself and this metamorphosis of the modified body, a sort of visual curriculum vitae, acts as a talisman which protects against dehumanizing alienation.

Changing one's body through these bodily writings establishes a new relationship to the world that allows many people to increasingly express their dissatisfaction with their society; "The dissatisfaction of the civilized in the face of civilization" is in the face of materialism in politics and science. This quest for the primitive is part of a resistance to rationalism and cold functionalism characteristic of scientific, philosophical and Western political ideas by a return to an animist art where myths are seen as "a story of origins, a word chosen by the 'history'" (Barthes)

Thus the body became the place of expression, the material of "spiritual resistance." Faced with the impossibility of changing the world, the counter-culture abandons organized political emancipation for a completely internal revolution, turned towards the individual.

Tattoos and primitive scarifications are making a comeback to clearly mark their dissatisfaction with current society. Political but also religious transgression because these archaic practices shatter the Judeo-Christian taboo of bodily integrity : "You will not attack your flesh, (...) you will not make any tattoo or mark. "(Leviticus, 19:28)

The influence of the East is undeniable. Faced with the inevitable and reactionary resistance of a certain intelligentsia mired in religions that it no longer even respects, the beatnik begins a spiritual parade, a counter-attack that comes from the East: Zen-Buddhism.

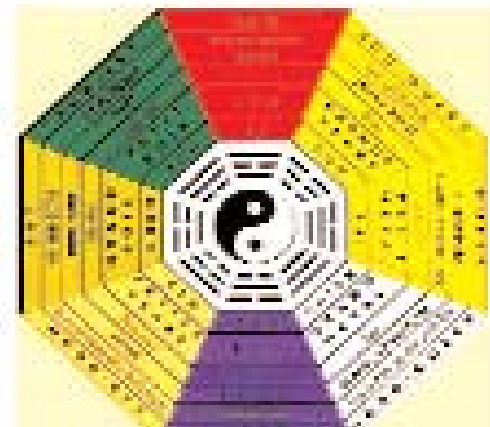
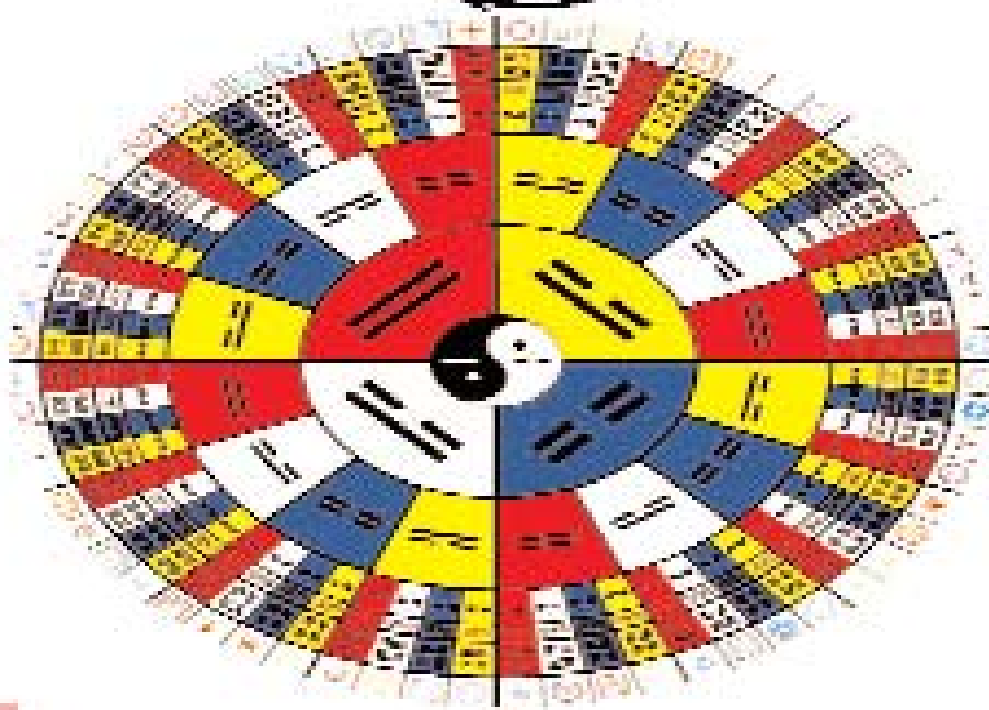
The zenist precepts that we discover, we think here of Psychotherapy in the East and the West by Alan Watts, correspond perfectly to the state of mind of the time and spread like wildfire in the first university campuses. , in the beatnik bands thereafter: spontaneous enlightenment belongs to the one who wants nothing and who enjoys everything. Zen word that Bob Dylan will translate as "When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose."

It is undeniable that Zen Buddhism never took root in the West as a religion but turned out to be an important philosophy where young people found what they needed i.e. the spiritual amorality of hashish and the sexual fantasy of the Tantric Orient with the spicy scents of the Indian Kama Sutra to express their rebellion against a society that has violated human beings (it is said that the 20th century was the most barbaric century of humanity) and mechanized its environment in the name of progress. Two oriental concepts take root : the Hindu chakras (Prana) and Chinese Feng Shui.

Feng shui also had a considerable influence on the choice of psychedelic colors. Traditional Feng Shui is based on the ability to rebalance the energies of the environment and the individual by bringing in a rational way external elements such as structures, shapes, sounds, scents, colors, feng shui symbols ... Color feng shui remains a very subtle and very energizing element of what we can bring to a place, a decorative element or even a garment, a piece of jewelry, or a make-up ...

There are two types of colors in feng shui. The yin colors (feminine principle, night, calm and darkness) which are soft colors, pastels and yang colors (masculine principle, day, noise and light) which are vivid. These feng shui colors are opposite and at the same time complementary. It takes a perfect yin-yang balance in a living space for harmony and well-being. Maybe it would be better to just feel good. Being well is far better than getting better. This well-being results from a subtle relationship between the inside and the outside.

The energetic vibrations brought by the colors participate in life in a very subtle way. For the Taoist practitioners who were at the origin of



Chinese medicine, color is pure energy and this energy has a very profound influence not only on the psyche (Shen) but also on the organs and their functions. In a way, the colors when they are pure nourish the organs and facilitate their function. Consequently when a color is, for one reason or another, disturbed it can, in return disturb the energy. We thus find in this principle the seven colors of the rainbow which, finally, are transformed into light, therefore in understanding (Ming = understanding, illumination formed by the characters sun and moon side by side) and in salvation, therefore in health and joy. Light generates life ... life manifests itself in the movement of colors. When these colors harmonize with life the vital energy manifests in all its strength and presence.

The “Four Orientals” used in Feng Shui are (1) the Red Phoenix corresponding to the South and requiring a clear space ... (2) the Black Turtle corresponding to the North and to a stable position ... (3) the Green Dragon corresponding to the East and to a capacity for growth ... (4) the White Tiger corresponding to the West and to a protective support.

These Four Orientals are the most obvious demonstration of the power of colors since to each orient and to each symbol is linked an essential color which makes it possible to facilitate the movement of energy ... therefore to regulate the environment and the habitat. These Four Orientals, or “Four Figures” (Si Xiang), can for their part still be divided into the “Eight Directions” or “Eight Trigrams” (Bagua) which are, in fact, the celestial directions. In this case, clockwise, the North is black in color, the Northeast is blue, the East is turquoise green, the Southeast is purple purple, the South is red, the South-West is carmine pink, West is white, Northwest is gray ... while the center, so the position of the observer or the self is yellow or brown.

For centuries in China, yellow has been the imperial color par excellence ... and therefore highly respected but little adopted as such. We use the color saffron, a mixture of red and yellow, one tempering the other as earth tempers fire and as fire transfers its excessive energy to the earth.

Blue represents constancy, improvement, permanent evolution, initiation and is used for pieces used for studies, teaching, intellectual work.

Green represents the rebirth of nature, germination, spring strength, the courage to undertake and is therefore particularly recommended for children's bedrooms.

The blue-turquoise color brings serenity, permanence, benevolence, quiet authority and is therefore appropriate for the parents' room.

Emerald green symbolizes wealth of wit, intelligence, courage and

bravery and is recommended for the work desk.

Purple represents majesty, maturity, authority conferred by experience and is intended primarily for the grandparents bedroom.

Purple is a symbol of awakening the spirit to what remains invisible to ordinary people, to communication with spirits (Shen) and is therefore reserved for the family altar of ancestors.

Red represents joy, celebration, vitality, opulence and is therefore found in the living room as well as on the main door, usually in the form of a charm or talisman.

Carmine pink represents sensuality, well-being and is intended for boudoirs, alcoves and bathrooms.

White represents purity, justice, decision, de facto authority and is suitable for courtrooms where the law is exercised. It is also the color that was used for entry to purify the energies entering and leaving the house. The white serves, in a way, in this particular case, as an energy lock.

Gray is the color of wisdom, of long matured experience, of reflection and is found in rooms where one wishes to find calm through meditation. It is the ideal color for rooms where you want to exhibit works of art.

Black is the color of interiorization, of creative immobility, of self-reflection, of humility. As in Feng shui decoration this color is difficult to use, Feng Shui practitioners substitute “shadow games” for it ... by playing with light on partitions or tissue paper. In houses, shadows produced by plants, and more particularly by bonsai and bamboo, and projected onto a partition with clever lighting, are readily used. No one can say that they do not know the Chinese shadows that arose from this concept.

The attraction of Orientalism, mainly on the American West Coast, greatly influenced the colorfield movement which means in French: “colored field”. Colorfield painting is one of the trends of abstract expressionism, it is opposed to the other great movement, action painting. The works of painters forming part of chromatic abstraction are easily recognizable by their flat colors. The artist expresses himself exclusively by means of the color that he poses on the canvas in flat areas with indecisive edges, in moving surfaces, sometimes monochrome, or composed of colored bands. He thus reaches a particularly sensitive spiritual dimension. They were opposed to the painters of action painting, of whom we spoke in the previous part which privileged the gesture.

According to Rothko, an American artist, considered one of the

leaders in chromatic abstraction, the colorfield aesthetic is very much linked to the spiritual, to “unconscious energies”. The artist considered himself a myth maker. Clyfford Still turned to a more static and reductive chromatic abstraction, emphasizing the ability of large areas of pure color to provide dramatic impact. He was one of the first to have a recognizable style, a characteristic image allowing to identify his work, his work. He takes up the idea of ??physical participation present in gestural abstraction, but the gesture, the expressiveness of the gesture is not the most important element, he wants to find “a new relationship between form and content to assert the organic unity of the painting and gave the colored field a new interiority”. The artist probably used a knife to spread his large pigmented surfaces, juxtapose them and assert the flatness of the canvas. The flamboyant and regular edges of the artist's forms encroach on the background seemingly composed with it a continuous surface. The brutality of his beginnings is an important aspect of Clyfford Still's work: “the truly torrential power of his imagery with its forms of cruel aggression, which seem torn, almost physically, from their natural environment. Still's brutality embodies a sort of conquest of mind over matter in a bitter struggle to create form out of chaos.

The struggle, the reconciliation of opposites are very present in Robert Motherwell. So the artist created a series entitled *I love you* - in opposition to *Elegies* linked to death - where life triumphs. In addition from a formal point of view, Motherwell wants to preserve the spontaneity of the gesture while exerting an aesthetic control we see here again the importance of



oppositions in his work. In his works, black and white are more than frequent colors, black for reasons as practical as they are aesthetic: black enamel was then the cheapest paint, white because Motherwell did not see it as a background. in the conventional sense of the term. One explanation for this opposition is the Manichean struggle of the power of light against the powers of darkness. The themes of death, love, discomfort (anguish) of the Westerner are also recurrent.

Source :

The importance of colors in Feng Shui,

<http://www.espacefengshui.com/couleur-dans-feng-shui.php>

Abstract expressionism

<http://ecoledeny.blogspot.ca/2011/01/introduction-definitive.html>

The hallucinatory kaleidoscope.

Then came LSD and without this potent hallucinogenic psychotropic synthesized in the Sandoz laboratories in 1938 by Albert Hofmann, psychedelic art, the retinal Feng shui art of the Bay Area posters as hermetic as it was trippy, had no chance of to exist. Inspired by Optical art, a transmutation was possible that curved our frightfully straight visions. It was enough to let go. Psychedelic culture was an art of seeing beyond appearances, ie the disappearance of contours between the user and the rest of the world. Increased perception, diffuse sensoriality promote the union of the mind and the cosmos and thus access to higher knowledge, to cognitive ecstasy.

When the design merges with the Optics art.

An arrangement of signs

that the posters made visible including The Psychedelic Sounds of the 13th Floor Elevators, an album whose sleeve ocellated in yellow and blue colors around an eye encrusted with symbols paved the way for a graphic trend that would follow Electric Prunes, Holy Modal Rounders, Fugs, Mothers Of Invention, Donovan and other Beatles.

A movement was born and with it a graphic style to which posters and record covers would give their letters of nobility. An advertising object at a lower cost, the poster borrows its technique from screen printing first in a sober black and white then by exploding the color. The process mixes photography, drawing, collage and painting in pursuit of George Hirth's Jugendstil, Pop Art initiated by Richard Hamilton, Op Art and Egyptian eclecticism. The lettering is the mark, rounded, twisted, bordering on readable. Optical games refer to the images produced by an acid trip. The arabesques melted in flashy colors translate the hallucinatory visions of travel. The posters pasted on the doors and walls are aimed at insiders who know the interactions between psychoactive drugs and music. They are composed of sufficiently explicit signs so that a connection is established between the public and the sound of the announced event.

In his remarkable work, augmented by posters, postcards, concert tickets but also badges, Philippe Thieyre insists on the emergence of an art put into orbit by Wes Wilson with The Sound, produced in September 1966. L'author who "did not study fine arts in his youth but horticulture (...) succeeds here in one of the most striking works of the period: sensual figure of a woman surrounded by



barely decipherable writings in a improbable mix of purple, green and red. He is with Rick Griffin, Alton Kelley, Stanley "Mouse" Miller and Victor Moscoso one of those who stand out from this innovative art forming a group nicknamed The Big Five.

Posters or Objects of worship

Between 1966 and 1971, nearly six hundred posters were produced by a handful of graphic designers handling the psychedelic code with a keen sense of hermetism which is the secret vocabulary of initiates. Their messages intended to gather at the doors of the Fillmore, the Avalon Ballroom and the Matrix, hipsters in need of thrills soon become objects of worship.

Bill Graham remembers: "I left around four in the morning, drove to Berkeley and covered all the walls of the city with posters, with a preference for building sites, with their large palisades. When people woke up in the morning, it was everywhere. In the beginning, the posters cost five or six cents each to print. I had five thousand made. Then the price went up a lot. Two-color, four-color... Some were almost illegible! So much so that I told the designers "if we keep this drawing, we will have to add an asterisk, and a legend at the bottom to explain everything". But it ended up becoming the fashionable game every week: trying to decipher what was written on the poster! "

Wes Wilson, who made his debut on the Bay Area scene designing flyers for the San

Francisco Mime Troup (a satirical theater company) and the Merry Pranksters Acid Tests was a successful graphic designer. He had designed the poster for the first Trips Festival and the logo for Family Dog Production, a collective in which Chester Helms, discoverer of Janis Joplin, played a most active role in organizing concerts. His typographic style strongly inspired by Alfons Mucha, Gustav Klimt and Alfred Roller announced a truly essential artist of the depths. This master of psychedelic retinal art hoped to make a living from his talent. "Between the printing press and the rest," says Wes Wilson, "I was making around seventy-five dollars per poster. We printed about five hundred, on 35 by 50 cm paper, a kind of very cheap vellum paper. The biggest problem was the money, because you couldn't really afford to do something that was in demand. We printed in black and white, sometimes with a color. Obviously, the washing time was quite long. It was an additional factor to take into account. Of the seventy-five, I was left in the forty-five dollars. For about eight hours of work".

The admiration aroused by these posters quickly inspired the idea of recovering them. Here they are transformed into posters adorning teenage bedrooms. Thus, the soaring conditions of domestic listening are recreated, which becomes a *modus operandi* for those who experience music as an alternative to standardized reality. The singularity of this art is that it is doomed to dissipation. The American way of life, and its propaganda in favor of consumption, is witnessing the proliferation of ephemeral acts promised to consumption.

This art has something inaugural in the mixture of forms that it sets up. He is undoubtedly, after Dada, the one who built the most bridges between practices. Multimedia, mixed media, are contemporary words of this time when simultaneously developing events including light shows, long-lasting concerts, readings, happenings, experimental theater. Culture seems irreversibly caught by the tail of desire, with the peculiarity that this one maintains the best relationship with spirituality and ecstasy modified by soft and hard drugs.

Psychedelia has finally penetrated all the interstices of alternative desire. We find it present in music (and it is the psychedelic sound) but also literature, cinema, theater, fashion and a certain tourism. If he has his homeland, San Francisco Bay, it is evident that he strayed from its center and traveled the world.

Retinal psychedelic art expired in 1971 with the closure of Bill Graham's two Fillmore's, leaving behind a cohort of the dead (Jimi Hendrix, Alan Wilson, Janis Joplin, Neal Cassady, Lenny Bruce...) while Goa and Kathmandu loomed, these dead-end roads where the last hippies with colorless brains are withering, mechanically attached to a psycholeptic syringe. However, this end of a world in the clouds should be qualified. The influence of psychedelia is visible in the

colorist propaganda of Pop art and kitsch.

Source :

Guy Darol, A RETINIAN ART, PSYCHEDELISM

<http://www.guydarol.fr/archive/2012/04/03/un-art-retinien-le-psychedelisme.html>

Trendy colors

Around the middle of the 19th century, there was a new factor in the use of color in the textile industry: fashion. Once the Industrial Revolution created a thriving middle class, the process began to persuade the European population (women in particular) of the great importance of choosing the right clothes. As today, fabric manufacturers flattered consumers by persuading them that they were the masters, not the victims, of the changing fashion. Scottish dyer John Pullar got carried away with color chemist William Perkin in 1857 on the plan to win "this class of the Community having all power: the women "to the new tincture of Perkin." If they take the mania and you can meet their demand, affirmed the young man, your glory and your fortune are assured".

The 1960s and 1970s also saw the arrival in the world of work of a new class of salaried workers resulting from the boom of post-war university graduates. This class is unique in that it enters companies in important positions without having worked there before. Before 1960, it was not uncommon to see a simple machinist rising one by one through the ranks to become the boss of the company. This new class, called the management class, is unique in that it has no emotional or emotional connection with the company that hires it. For the manager, the company is a cold place where the harsh reality of the market is expressed by the ever increasing search for profit margins.

The effects of marketing and management are being felt more and more. Social classes and citizens are grouped there according to their income, their sex, their color in as many commercial niches, categories that must henceforth be targeted. Society is now sliced into socio-economic sausage to the detriment of the concept of citizenship. Everything becomes targeted, the artist Niki de Saint Phalle understood it well since she begins to target the paintings of her colleagues and destroy them with a gun, destroying at the same time the notion of a masterpiece replaced by junk for all adapted to our desires more than our needs.

Youth is no longer an age but an ideology expressed by Marcuse's famous slogan: "the imagination in power." The new management gurus couldn't pass up such an opportunity. In a few years, they transformed the "young" concept into a youth market offering huge profit possibilities: films, books, music, clothes and even young

“stylish” cars: Corvette, Mustang, Camaro not to mention Harley Davidson and Triumph Commando.

Very quickly, the most marginal forms of expression came to feed the imagination of advertisers, mainly the colors, shapes, artefacts, slogans produced by countercultural rebellions which, once well recovered, will in turn set the standards. modern marketing. The creation of the Color Marketing Group in 1962 confirms that advertising became the imagology of capitalism and color its Trojan horse. From now on, designers, fashion professionals, creatives of advertising houses around the world receive almost two years in advance the Marketing Group guidelines on the use of such and such colors for a given year ; guidelines pompously called the “trendy colors” in everyday life and in material culture.

“Color is everywhere - from the metallic finish of an automobile to the aged look of paint. What happens from a color standpoint in one industry impacts another, causing color influences to constantly change. The interaction of color experts is vital in order to remain on the cutting edge of what is happening not only in your business, but the business of everyone else. After all, the world becomes smaller every day. CMG’s major focus is to identify the direction of color and design trends. CMG members then interpret that information into salable colors for manufactured products across all industries including: Action / Recreation, Consumer Goods, Technology, Home, Visual Communications, Transportation, Juvenile Products, Fashion, and environments for Office, Health Care, Retail, Hospitality / Entertainment and Institutional / Public Spaces. “

The vitalist and poetic surge of the counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s tried unsuccessfully to color the world, but the mirage of the psychedelic rainbow was quickly taken over by pop art and marketed excessively by fashion. , the design and kitsch of the consumer society.

The recovery, the diversion of avant-garde art by the bureaucracy means the end of the capacity for rebellion proper to art. Not only does art no longer appear as a solution, but the artist’s submission to the established order arouses both acceptance and indifference from the public. Acceptance of trinket-for-rich art and indifference to art “pissing in the bourgeois fireplace.” “

Technocracy has succeeded where all artistic avant-gardes have failed, it has succeeded in shaping the new man so hoped for at the start of the last century. We are mutants. And any change implies a devastating passage where the success or failure of the process is played out.

The art of canning.

The real winner of the art in the service of hegemonic ideology in the

XXth century pop art as it announced the definitive victory of the positivist ideology of progress moving from Auguste Comte based on the technique and the triumph of the tandem productivism / consumption and enshrines the trademark and the “star system” as an icon of social consumerism and canonizes advertising as a new art of ideological propaganda no longer of the capitalism of Adam Smith but of the ultra liberalism of the “golden boys” of Wall Street. Is it any wonder that all the big names in pop art have worked in the advertising world : “Warhol was a renowned fashion designer, specializing in shoes, Rosenquist made a living painting billboards. Lichtenstein did design and was a window dresser, Oldenburg worked in illustration and magazine design. Finally, Wesselmann had studied caricature and comics. »(Lippart cited in Triumph of American art, T-II, note 15, p.208)

The universe of pop art is that of the advertising designer whom he consecrates as the true artist of our time. He is the only one to have understood that kitsch forms a system which adopts brilliant ideas and arranges forms in such a way as to create an art / desire of perpetual consumerism as the art of living of the middle class, its “recipe for happiness.” Fashion will be the strategy of the publicist by which he creates generations of objects made to be copied in thousands of copies, originality diluted in the copy such is the theory of the gadget. Thus the serial image of Mona Lisa, Jackie Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe represents both the assembly line and the repetitiveness of the advertising slogan. In the Life magazine, we will go so far as to say that the pop charts are like IBM shares, specifying that it is now or never to buy. (Sandler, Triumph of American Art, Volume II, p. 150)

Soviet realism was to communism what pop art is to capitalism, the imagological celebration of machinist technocracy and the political ideologies that underlie them. In derision, pop art was called “capitalist realism”, which it actually was. From the new man we pass to the “homo oeconomicus” as the general model of modern existence.

“If mass communications harmoniously and often surreptitiously confuse art, politics, religion, philosophy and commerce, they nonetheless reduce these cultural domains to a common denominator : the market form. “(Herbert Marcuse, The One-Dimensional Man, p.90)

Because what surprises most is the speed with which pop art has established itself - in less than a year - on the international art market as if collectors, gallery owners, museum directors, curators of collections, the boards of directors of major cultural foundations, publishers of specialized magazines and art critics all at the same time grasped the historical significance of pop art. Many doubt it and rumors circulate about a possible collusion, including the art professional William Seitz who remarked very aptly when thinking of the instant success of pop art : “A demand for avant-garde art stronger



BARBARELLA



Colorful capitalism

ELDER Market Series
The new Market Series is a collection of 12 clocks, each with a different design. The clocks are made of wood and are available in a variety of colors. The clocks are priced from \$19.95 to \$29.95.



NEWARK Mind Poppers
A collection of 12 mind poppers, each with a different design. The mind poppers are made of wood and are available in a variety of colors. The mind poppers are priced from \$19.95 to \$29.95.



WEAR A STAR AND BE A STAR

Look for these stars in the new collection of 12 stars, each with a different design. The stars are made of wood and are available in a variety of colors. The stars are priced from \$19.95 to \$29.95.

Look for these stars in the new collection of 12 stars, each with a different design. The stars are made of wood and are available in a variety of colors. The stars are priced from \$19.95 to \$29.95.



than offer... it's just grotesque. Several spoke of a consensus of the nouveau riche towards an art which resembled them and thus infecting the art world of galleries with the virus of financial speculation. Seitz, curator and critic even wondered if the life of art was becoming an art / business so much the artist became dependent on speculation, promotion, sensationalism, advertising operations and insatiable appetite. mass-media eager for cutting-edge discoveries. (cited in Sandler, *Triumph of American Art*, Volume II)

Pop art is part of this aestheticism of diversion as implemented by the Dadaists and Cubists but in an opposite direction. By taking up the idea of Duchamp's "ready-made", Warhol replaces its parody by the glorification of the object of consumption as a political act. Because if the object, its logo and its advertising make their entry into the art world, it is also to celebrate the apology of the "American way of life" and of capitalism to which it adheres with fervor. In this sense, pop art has no esoteric pretension to be strictly materialist, a down-to-earth vision of the world observable through the mass media and mass culture in general. If "the medium is the message" then pop art illustrates it well because the whole contemporary environment, whether the headlines of the popular press, black and white television, close-ups in technicolor cinema, advertisements. Extravagant consumer goods, celebrity photographs in celebrity magazines, ball machines and jukeboxes in shabby bars with gaudy signs, it all forms the catch-all imagery of the sixties. The post-atomic existential anguish of the abstract painters of the 1950s is wiped off the map : "To hell with the bomb" said the painter Indiana.

Pop art is therefore an unconditional acceptance of the American myth, a total approval without emotion or sentimentality of the current state of society with its rubbish, junk food, slot machines and shopping malls. This is why pop art is typically American and its promotion abroad typically imperialist.

In front of a simple bottle of Coca-Cola painted in black and white on a canvas six feet high, Warhol's friend, the filmmaker Di Antonio laughed : "this is what we are, sodas, canned soups. , burgers, chips, hot dogs, ice cream cones. This cultural enhancement of the capitalist product, like the bottle of Coca-Cola, is accompanied by an advertising escalation of stereotypes. It is indeed political propaganda celebrating the total victory of the market. We will also talk about an art of sublimation where the images of advertising, the star system, political icons are removed from their precise universe to be transformed into hyper-images of civilizations. From cowboy John Wayne to rebel James Dean via Al Capone and Bonnie and Clyde, here is the cast of popular heroes alongside baseball players, pin-ups and even cosmonauts whose image obsessively multiplied like so many advertising slogans. sinks into the consciousness of consumers.

"We had the opportunity to change the world and preferred the shopping center." (Stephen King)

With Warhol, it is the end of the romantic artist always on the sidelines. Warhol is fully involved in the social game. Transvestites, homosexuals, drug addicts, brilliant psychopaths, all the Warholian underground of the *Factory* is found formalized by the media in need of stars. Warhol becomes a social figure just like Jackie Kennedy, he achieved what he wanted most : to be a brand as well known, in America at least, as Coca Cola. In this sense, Warhol is the consecration of the dandyism that Baudelaire described in these terms : "It is above all the ardent need to make an originality, contained within the external limits of propriety. It's a kind of self-worship ... "Warhol is a self-proclaimed artist whose direction is assumed by Warhol the narcissistic publicist.

But more than the product, it is also its mass production method which is celebrated by the work of the machine. From the start, Warhol "delivered the goods" with the series *Morte et désastre* and his works with evocative titles: *129 die in Jet* (1962), *Orange car accident* (1963), *White car in flame* (1963), *Catastrophe d ' an ambulance* (1964), *Catastrophe du Samedi* . (1964) The "pope of pop-art" wants to demonstrate that man will always be a source of catastrophe as long as he has not reached machinist perfection and his "industrial reincarnation. »(Vincent Lavoie, *Technical burrs and other collateral surprises*, *Argument*, vol 6, no1, p. 43)

Lichtenstein, on the other hand, celebrates print and comics as much as offset printing and letterpress reproduction techniques. The coke bottle is celebrated as a product and trademark as much as the bottling technique which celebrates the repetition and banality of the machinist movement. Marilyn Monroe is celebrated as a prefabricated icon by the media just like the star system itself. All models, from Marilyn to the laundry soap box, are treated like boxes of soup, merchandise. Because this is all American pop art: an immense advertising celebration (medium is the message) of star-objects, products, brands and machinist processes used by new technologies in the service of "colorfull" capitalism. The American dollar, Mickey Mouse, James Dean, Liz Taylor, Campbell's soup cans, Mao Zedong, the relish-mustard hot dog invest the art world and transform it "en masse" into consumable and disposable signs like so many objects and images elevated to the rank of monuments of modernity. The gadget, the useless, the ephemeral, the banality as sacred values ??of everyday life likely to be erased at any time by the nuclear big bang, this is all the tragedy of consumerism that hides behind the sublimatory fiesta of pop art . It is "the shadow of the Great Machine" which transforms everything it touches into a great mechanical mess.

Ephemeral resistance.

Advertising is so invasive that it adapts, like thistle, to all possible surfaces; labels stick to products, posters take hold of walls, objects in shop windows, logos and brands in neon calligraphy light up the night, slogans invade radio waves, advertising spots, television and computer screens. Even the facades of houses cannot escape it.

The post-war era brings a new world filled with new forms of expression - posters, graffiti, comics, advertising - guaranteeing a new socio-economic reality called a society of mass consumption from which we must eradicate objects as fragments of reality. Like an ethnologist of contemporaneity, the artist is again interested in reality and its most ordinary components such as illuminated signs, shop windows, gadgets, "celebrity" magazines, cars and other everyday objects. current consumption. This collection of objects allied to the serial replica of mechanization will fuel the practice of collage and assembly techniques and their most diverse extensions as so many playful diversions. The banal object is placed at the heart of art and becomes the idol of pop art as we have seen.

After 1960, the new realism made an extraordinary turnaround to become truly critical of this frantic consumption of objects. A whole descriptive mode is set up: New Novel, New Cinematographic Wave, New Realism, all in reaction to the new analysis grids provided by the consumer society.

Graffiti, the narcissistic art of mass capitalism.

Writing on the walls of prehistoric caves, catacombs, pyramids, were once a gesture of great symbolic significance, generally confined to a closed place not easily accessible to the public. The first modern graffiti to achieve real popularity is the famous "Kilroy was here". Indeed, during the progression of American troops on French soil, following the Normandy landings in 1944, the soldiers wrote "kilroy was here", accompanied by a character with a big nose who was hiding behind a wall, like a foot. nose to their comrades to say "I was there first". This has fueled many rumors among the troops, such as that of a "super GI". This inscription appears today on the memorial dedicated to the soldiers of the Second World War in Washington DC.

At the end of the 1960s that graffiti took on its popular boom. In protest against the Vietnam War, many peace signs were painted on the walls of university campuses in America but also in Europe. The first known and famous graffiti artist for his work is Cornbread, nicknamed the "godfather of graffiti". He initially acts accompanied by Cool Earl, he began in 1967 by inscribing his blaze on walls in order to impress a woman he was in love with, then gained his popularity thanks to the media coverage of his work. The media will incorrectly announce the artist's death in 1971, to which he responded

by painting "cornbread lives" on the sides of an elephant at the Philadelphia Zoo. It ceased its activities in 1971.

As a result, graffiti "invaded" New York with its main representatives such as Taki 183 or Tracy 168. So rather quickly the codes of graffiti are put in place with the appearance of particular styles (such as the so-called "bubble" lettering or the lettering "wildstyle"), and is confirmed the tendency to privilege particular supports (trains) as well as often spectacular practices allowed by the groups which constitute themselves (like the painting of an entire wagon called "whole car"). This practice was then strongly repressed from the end of the 1970s, in the streets and subways of New York, it then spread to other places to gradually "invade" the big American cities (Philadelphia, Washington, LA, Montreal ...) and European (Paris, London, Berlin...).

The spray can and the marker quickly established themselves as tools although at the beginning many "graffiti artists" used brushes or rollers. Now well established in the West, it is gradually spreading throughout the world, the most disadvantaged countries using brushes and rollers to offset the cost of spray paint. Contrary to popular belief, most of the first "graffiti artists" did not come from disadvantaged situations, and were moreover more often from wealthy classes, because the material intended for graffiti represents a high cost. Even today a large part of graffiti artists (taggers) comes from easy situations. Of course, practices have developed for obtaining hardware, such as the "d system".

In graffiti terminology, tag and graffiti are two very different things. Graffiti is a drawn plan, to which perhaps given volume in 3D, which are often colored, they can be accompanied by numerous aesthetic flourishes. The tag is only a signature (A graffiti is always signed by a tag) it is the name, the blaze of the graffiti artist. It is written and only concerns typography.

Initially, popularity is based on the quantity of parts, the inaccessibility of locations, the most risky places, then quickly reputation also takes into account the aesthetic quality of the parts. Then the search for reputation takes over; so that the tag, the signature becomes more important than the work itself. It is the signature that is sought after on the art market.

Source :

<http://sites.univ-lyon2.fr/lettres/nte3/08-09/graffiti/index.html>

The false mirror of kitsch.

Pop art marked the comeback of kitsch no longer judged negatively as in the past, it is the Trojan horse of a culture of artifice valued by the

desire for possession. In fact, pop art celebrates the drunkenness and vertigo of the merchant festival. It is offered as a luxury advertisement for a kitsch art of living. Due to the enormous development of advertising and mass communications since WWII, we passively accept a whole panoply of new signs, slogans, images and emblems. Quietly a whole ersatz of “artistic pathologies” has been set up for those who are precisely insensitive to culture. It is now clear that kitsch has great propaganda potential.

For Abraham Moles, “the kitsch position lies between fashion and conservatism as the acceptance of” the greater number “. Kitch is therefore essentially democratic: it is acceptable art, which does not shock our mind by a transcendence outside of everyday life, by an effort that exceeds us - especially if it must make us exceed ourselves. . Kitch remains essentially mass art, that is to say, acceptable by the masses and offered to them as a system. It is through mediocrity that kitsch products arrive at authentically fake. It is mediocrity that unites them, that melts them into a set of aesthetic, functional, political, or religious perversities. ” (Pauwels Ruben, Kundera facing kitsch.

<http://www.thesis.net/kundera/kundera.htm>)

In fact the pop art / kitsch tandem is to democracy and the middle class what the avant-garde was to anarchy and the marginalized and marks the victory of the capitalist ideology of the typically Western middle class. The citizen became a consumer, an exponential new class of baby boomers.



If “the project of postmodern society is to offer none”, then kitsch is the perfect representation. We take up the reflection of Hermann Broch for whom kitsch designates the style of an era incapable of creating a style. Kitch is the art of the consumer society where all the arts, all fashions, all styles, amalgamate into so many stereotypes of beauty, simulacra and truth, from romance novels to clichés. political speeches, fake advertising lies. Kitch is a culture of saturation. We live in the era of “scrapbooking” as a sublimation of contemporary individualistic society.

The style of our time is that of all styles, abstract or documentary images, portraits, decorative forms, self-fiction texts mixed up and staged in the great book of everyday life.

At the beginning, kitsch meant an artistic and industrial production of objects of bad taste, a sort of junk, flashy art ; kitsch was then associated with the world of objects and superfluous decorations as in Art Nouveau. Today kitsch not only denotes an aesthetic malaise but propels it as an undeniable social fact contaminating all of Western and capitalist civilization. So if we look at kitsch as an indication of a profound social change, we see that it does indeed

represent the current form of the imagination, both personal and collective. Kitsch is not an “anti-aesthetic” but the slow degradation of the “system of the fine arts” peak of the challenge of “beautiful” and “good taste” academic enterprise at the beginning of XXth century. This amalgamation of technology and consumption distorts artistic taste into a caricature of art.

Writers and philosophers, mainly from Central Europe, Broch, Kundera, Schulz, understood before their time that in modern society where the subject slips towards its objectification, kitsch became an existential trait of being; there is a “drop of kitsch” in every individual. Hitler and Stalin understood before their time the full imagological scope of an ideological and political kitsch, like Richelieu in France, to impose on the masses formal standards for all artistic creations, both literary and visual.

A decor of plastic, glass and steel, junk that invades, even occupies our entire psychological space like a kind of pathology. We work less and less to realize our potential, but more and more to consume. The motive for consumption takes precedence over personal achievement. The possession of objects is the new conquest, the being is defined by its acquisitions, “design” by its objects. Kundera in *The Art of the Novel* will highlight that kitsch is an existential attitude of man’s need “to look at oneself in the mirror of embellishing lies and to recognize themselves in it with moved satisfaction. »(L’art du roman, 1986)

Popular, democratic kitsch is intimately linked to pop art as the triumph of capitalism and mass consumption. This kitsch tragicomedy demonstrates the mechanism of the commodity economy: junk and junk replace quality goods; the window mannequin becomes the symbol of the alienation of individuals bewitched by so many golden calves. So, often, the newly acquired original work is taken off the market, hidden from public view and hidden in a sealed vault. The work is therefore no longer an object of contemplation but of speculation; the more it reaches a high rating on the art market, the more hidden and secure it is. From now on, the work will be seen through communication technologies such as photography, cinema, video, television. This “cultural food” relayed at home by the mass media promotes the market for facsimiles and posters. Thus emerges a notion of kitsch as a common denominator of our postmodern civilization.

Advertising is so invasive that it

adapts, sticks like thistle to all possible surfaces; labels stick to products, posters take hold of walls, objects in shop windows, logos and brands in neon calligraphy light up the night, slogans invade radio waves, advertising spots, television and computer screens. Even the facades of houses cannot escape it. We are obliged to note that the public space is entirely invaded by the advertiser who extends his sprawling visibility into the private office. “The *Res publica* has dethroned the *Res publica*. “. (Besson)

“Today; unfortunately the disappearance of the avant-gardes does not mean the disappearance of the rearguards, it is rather even the triumph, in a certain way, of the rearguard ... But these are not groups, c ‘is the fact that the whole of art is also assigned to recapitulate a little all the previous forms, to remake the history of art in reverse and to manage all its past, that is a problem at the background. Connors called it the kidnapping of modern art, that is, this way of taking up all forms in a juxtaposition, a chaotic mosaic.”

“So the distinction between art and the production of common, banal images is less and less clear. The only one to have taken note and to manage with radicality this total trivialization of aesthetics, to have gone to the other side of aesthetics, is Warhol. In my opinion, apart from him, we are dealing with all kinds of artistic, aesthetic forms, which, somewhere today, are more animated by disillusion. We get the impression that even artists no longer believe in aesthetic illusion, that aesthetic illusion is dead, that they are managing the decomposition of their own instrument of vision. Disappearance of art, whose end already announced by Hegel dates a long time ago. The disappearance of the aesthetic dimension, this event was handled for, say, a century and a half. All modern art is the story of a disappearance, a destructuring, a deconstruction of art.”

“But now it’s over, the process has come beyond its end, we are also beyond the end. Now



HYPERMARCHÉ UNIVERS TOTAL

VENTE DE LIQUIDATION JUSQU'À ÉPUISEMENT DES STOCKS

Art

- Peinture
- Gravure
- Musique
- Sculpture
- Littérature
- Architecture
- Théâtre
- Cinéma
- Poésie
- Danse

Economie

- Capitalisme
- Etatisme
- Marxisme
- Libéralisme
- Colonialisme
- Dirigisme
- Protectionnisme
- Autarcie
- Coopératisme

Politique

- Démocratie
- Dictature
- Monarchie
- Oligarchie
- Communisme
- Intégrisme
- Socialisme
- Anarchisme
- Autocratie
- Faïsme

Science

- Physique
- Chimie
- Cybernétique
- Biologie
- Mathématique
- Géométrie
- Astronomie
- Ecologie

Philosophie

- Esthétique
- Ethique
- Logique
- Métaphysique
- Epistémologie
- Ontologie
- Morale

Religion

- Bouddhisme
- Islamisme
- Hindouisme
- Protestantisme
- Shintoïsme
- Catholicisme
- Judaïsme

Le monde est en solde

we are just recycling. Effectively recycling the vestiges of past forms, THAT'S THE KITSCH. "(Baudrillard Jean, Beyond the End, www.humains-associés.fr)

"To be 'civilized' in the Western sense is to have many needs". (Moles)

Art Nouveau, the kitsch of the beginning of the century, elitist art of the triumphant bourgeoisie, transformed, at the end of the same century, into a global system of social representation associated with the triumph of capitalism and the middle class, it is a dominant system which covers almost all of social life, the spirit of which is found as much in visual arts, music and literature, as much as in fashion and decoration.

"They wanted to fight, and win. They wanted to fight, to conquer their happiness. But how to fight? Against who? Against what? They lived in a strange and shimmering world, the shimmering universe of mercantile civilization, the prisons of abundance, the fascinating traps of happiness. (...) The enemy was invisible. Or, rather, he was in them, he had rotten, gangrenous, ravaged them. They were the stuffing turkeys. Small docile beings, the faithful reflections of the world which taunted them. They were buried up to their necks in a cake of which they would never have but the crumbs. »(Georges Pérec, Les Choses, a story of the sixties)

Modern capitalism has taken over the entire strategy of diversion



put in place by the avant-gardes and turned the weapon against the protesting aggressor. Rebel art therefore essentially contributes to renewing more effectively the society that produces it. The insubordination of the anti-heroes fully plays its role as a valve. Henceforth art will be confined to resistance; "soft" resistance which will act as a barometer of the degree of frustration, which by this very fact will indicate to the system where it must intervene to curb and plug the breach of dissatisfaction (think of May 68) and thus consequently regulate its development by satisfaction immediate desires (think of the consumer society) and thus appease the tumult.

"Everything must be consumed including our destiny. "

Partying is sort of the solution the West has found to end this endless orgy of negativity that is human history. Let us stuff ourselves to the point of becoming obese like helium balloons, consume the futility of the object-gadget as a sign of useless material to give ourselves the impression of paradoxically continuing to live. We thus become "prisoners of the useless". Decadence, I cry out your name!

"All, I wanna do, it's have some fun. I got the feeling, I'm not the only one." (Sheryl Crow)

It is not the party that is the problem, it is when there is the party everywhere and all the time. Even the companies are adjusting the festive agenda of the working days while waiting to relocate the company at the request of the shareholders. Unlike Marx who foresaw "that the withering away of the state and the

disappearance of work would ensure finally socialist humanity an unlimited amount of leisure, it is clear that it is rather neo-liberal capitalism and the state that were able to hide the vagaries of life through the promised feast with a great deal of publicity.

Rebellion for rebellion is like art for art. Nothing is art and rebellion since everything is art and festive. Ultimately, nothing is celebration anymore since everything is festive.

And “great art” is no exception, a sort of sophisticated Gnostic sect of an active minority cut off from the mass, relegated to the micro milieu of artist-run centers or disused factories. Think how quickly teenage graffiti art from the Bronx, Harlem, Brooklyn found its way into the trendy Soho galleries of East Village fully integrated into the market. It is astounding to note how easily the market neutralizes any dispute, any subversion. Haring and Basquiat’s graffiti, icons of the New York underground, have gone from sordid alleys to the luxurious salons of Fifth Avenue in a few months. Contrary to the doctrines of salvation underlying the artistic programs and artistic movements of this century, the capitalist economy does not seek to save the world but to own it, to own everything.

“Perhaps it should be said in a sense, that the Hegelian analysis of the end of art (of the fine arts) is being realized, the great moment of art has passed away. The avant-garde has run out of steam, art is nothing more than an elegant distraction, high-end consumption. - The avant-gardes remain but trample and no longer disturb anyone. - Everything happens as if art only served to feed the network of galleries and museums, organize monster exhibitions, constitute a financial investment, become an object of speculation or else, it leaves indifferent like information quiet, wise, not very passionate, a vector of sociability in disenchanted times.- The heavy creativity of our societies is now located in the sciences and techniques. (...) What can compete with the emotional and technical power of test-tube babies, the manipulation of genes, the conquest of space? We expect much more from art, but a lot from laboratories and companies. Culture, art, advertising, all of this inexorably slips into the fields of gadgets, over-media coverage, and accessorization of life. »(Lipovetsky quoted in Art and publicity, p.508-509)

“Consume more, you will live less” (Fluxus slogan)

Since the Paleolithic, the premises for all religion, including consumerism fetishism, its rituals, its temples, begin with the worship of objects collected like seashells and then made like statuettes. To consume is to be part of social life, to lack money is heresy, a simple observation that Ulrike Meinhof will call the *Konsumterror*; the terrorism of consumption and its fetishes.

Aparté: In 1760, Charles de Brosses, scholar traveler, called fetishism

this first form of religion embodied in the object long before the cult of abstract and invisible divinities. De Brosses explains to us that fetishes are adored for themselves. So where does their religious significance come from? Our scholar, by studying the subject closely, discovered a fetishist cult called “boetyle” which consisted in contemplating its reflection on stones coated with grease acting as a mirror. What the individual worshiped in the fetish was the relationship between the object and his or her own reflected image. The intimate objects thus fetishized quickly became objects in which all social relations were condensed and thus became signs of exchanges and cordiality between individuals. This practice subsequently evolved into a commercial dimension and the fetish object became the currency we know today. Note the effigy, the portrait always present on our coins.

Globalization seeks to achieve what no religion has achieved; or achieve universality through the establishment of a unique global culture: trade. Antiquity and the Middle Ages offered an essentially theistic religious culture, from the Renaissance to the end of the 19th century a humanist culture oscillating between materialism and scientism was imposed, followed by an atheist humanist culture deviated towards dogmatic atheism and finally we Here is, for the first time in history, at least in the West, in the presence of a truly secular and commercial culture. The cult of money has ended up taking the place of God and even proposes a demiurgic hegemony of the market and consumerism as a universal finality.

“Homo œconomicus is the ultimate avatar of instrumental reason. The general model of modern existence is that of technical and economic requirement. »(...) In liberal thought, there is a reduction of individuals to the same denominator consumerism; rejection of the principle of diversity. »(Philippe Engelhard, *The Global Man*, p. 292, 308)

We are witnessing a real canning of the world and of our humanist aspirations. What Karl Marx in *The Capital*, Technology Name “the fetishism of commodities” : the merchant of happiness earthly utopia in achieving our desires by the possession of the goods the “boetyle” object of capitalism.

Pushing the analysis still further, Marx will deduce that commodities also reflect the labor relations which made them possible, hence their so desirable social qualities. Under the effect of advertising, the mirror effect of the object reaches such a limit that the relations between things replace the relations between men. There is no longer a class war but rather a war of goods where capitalism is always winning. The pinnacle is reached when all the merchant fetishes amalgamate one another to form the neoliberal “The Great Fetish”.

Ultimately, the man who has become a commodity is himself

consumable - the black market in organs - a sort of anthropophagy which echoed in these terms:

“Capitalism would henceforth be the consumption of humanity by itself. By placing man in the continuous cycle of nature’s uses, the utility society makes man a consumable resource like any other. (Denis Duclos, Autophagy, the great threat of the end of the century, Monde Diplomatique, August 1996, p.14)

Kitsch man as a consumable resource is one of the fundamental changes at the start of the third millennium. Thus we find ourselves

in exactly the same position as the Native American who traded his fur skins for the illusion of glass beads and mirror pieces from European merchants.

Even art cannot escape amalgamation. The neoliberal capitalist has understood very well what the work of art can bring to a company’s social communication strategy. Mona Lisa can thus be found on cheese wrappers, spools of thread, bath towels, as are the Greco-Roman sculptures in faux marble from suburban gardens. So much for the recovery of academic works of art. It is different for contemporary art which gives rise to a very specific marketing strategy: the collection of companies.

The *corporate art* associated with corporate sponsorship comes full circle: at the beginning of the last century, if art was based advertising methods, it is now undeniable that art is indeed itself become advertising for the benefit of corporate branding. It is about

getting people to admit that there was no solution for art outside the market.

“Obese and triumphant, symbol of economic power, corporate art is no longer this referenced and modernist museum art, but a new artistic-advertising academism. (...) The advertising future of the art world and the stake that art represents for the economic world show a rapprochement of paradigms: that of visibility and creativity - or if you will, the link that secretly, and perhaps for a long time, artistic innovation and industrial and market production”. (Christian Besson, Art World and Res publicita in Art et Publicité, op. Cit., P.495-497)

The work of art is therefore irremediably diverted towards the “corporate image”, the corporate image giving a particular symbolic connotation of the company as if it were amulets or relics invested with magical and even religious powers. Even more spectacular effect when popular stars are added to it as advertising icons, a sort of sacred investiture where the artificial myth seeks alliance with the authentic myth. Imagogy thus leads to myhtagogy conferring a mythical value on elements, on institutions, on characters to whom this value does not suit. This diversion of the mythical value towards the false myth is what we call the “myth-kitsch”. (Dorfles Gillo, The Kitsch)



We are not witnessing the “end of art” but rather the deconstruction of the aesthetic mysticism of art for art as a religion whose ideal was placed above nature and life.

“I created all the parties, all the triumphs, all the dramas. I invented

new flowers, new stars, new flesh, new languages. Well ! I have to bury my imagination and the memories. A beautiful glory of artist and storyteller carried away! Me ! me who follows me says mage or angel, exempt from all morality, I am on the ground, with a duty to seek, and the rough reality to extinguish! Peasant ! “(Arthur Rimbaud)

This confession of Rimbaud marked the end of the romantic genius of the rebellious artist and contains all the dichotomy between artistic creation and its reception, its impregnation in society. The contemporary artist just like the philosopher, the poet or the scientific researcher presents an unprecedented reflection of the being in relation to the complexity, the flaws and the exaltations of society. Through the “materials” of dreams, magic and the sublime, the artist presented a gaze that wanted to be transcendent and societal, the artist presented a “social project”. Today the process of individuation is so powerful that it has reduced the subversive genius to an identity function essential to “self-invention”. We are all rebels, it is well known. Since we are all artists, artistic production, however talented it may be, slips more and more towards the overproduction of the gadget. The subversiveness of art when it periodically presents itself is immediately drowned in the ebb and flow of the myriad products offered on the consumer market. The work of art has become an artefact.

We are therefore witnessing the apogee of Western art of the materialist, capitalist and democratic society in gestation since the Renaissance. All commodities are art, all works of art are commodities, everyone is an artist and it is the market of supply and demand that determines who will be elected to the pantheon of contemporary art. “Art for the sake of art” is identical to the expression “business is business”. It was Bourdieu who was the first to notice that modern cultural life is organized into “cultural industries” which do not escape economic and social constraints. The cultural field is both a commercial field and a state affair. Thus between the work and the public is inserted a panoply of marketing agents, publishers, art dealers, gallery owners, artists’ agents, curators and agents of the State who invest the intellectual field and transform it into a circuit of distribution, the art object becomes an object of speculation. Dubuffet will denounce “the asphyxiating culture” as religion once was. The era of the art guerrillas is now over; culture supports them and makes them harmless by recovering their works in the distribution circuit, no avant-garde will escape it now that society has understood the lesson that Andy Warhol instilled in us.

“In Picabia, Duchamps, the machine is still present as surrealist mechanicity, not as mechanicality, that is to say as automatic reality of the modern world. Warhol, for his part, identifies purely and simply with the mechanical, which gives his images their contagious power (...) This is why Warhol can make himself the screenwriter of a perfect

representation, equal for all. All the images are good, since they also create an illusion. All the people are great, and the pictures we take of them are bound to be successful. It is the universal democracy of figuration. Warhol does just that: figuration. (...) The whole world, not only scenic and media, but political and moral is dedicated to figuration. It is about a metaphysics of our modern world, which joins that of the unconditional simulacrum (...) Because this is indeed the destiny of all our techniques: to make the world even more illusory. Warhol understood this, he understood that it is the machine which generates the total illusion of the modern world. “ (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*)

Simulacrum, illusion, this is the contemporary kitsch universe of which Las Vegas is the capital. American popular culture invades architecture to the point of making it disappear under a cloud of neon, multicolored signs. In 1955, in the suburbs of Minneapolis, Victor Gruen invented the shopping town, a line of shops under one roof in the middle of an ocean of parking lots. The shopping centers, veritable merchant cities, were followed by the creation of the spectacle city, Las Vegas. From his study on the “Strip” of Las Vegas, the architect Robert Venturi detected there an essential teaching for the affirmation of an “urban architecture knowing also to appropriate the communicative richness of the vulgar constructions of the era of the freeways and supermarkets. “ The “trade-show” phenomenon will culminate with Disneyland, the city that looks at itself and consumes itself. The escalation of giant advertisements with their signs-logos-sculpture juxtaposes the real and the illusory of the new American middle class, a jumble of machines, electronic images, comics books, soap TV, drive-ins, mixers, gadgets of all kinds, an accumulation of mass-produced, fun, quickly consumable and disposable products. Behind the spectacular vision of this over-mediated world looms the homogenization of desire for purposes of “voluntary servitude” made in the USA. (Béret Chantal, *The Pop Years*, Edition of the Center Pompidou, Paris, 2001)

If kitsch is a lie and yet continues to proliferate and prosper, it is because modern man needs this lie to identify with it, as with the game where he deludes himself about his earnings and his future life.

Kermann Broch rightly reminds us that: “kitsch art could neither be born nor subsist if it did not exist the kitsch man who loves it, who as a producer wants to make it and as a consumer is ready to buy it. and even to pay a good price for it ”. (A few remarks about kitsch, p.7) And Brock wonders : “ In what kind of work of art or, more exactly, in what artificial creation is he (the kitsch) trying to transform the human life? The answer is simple: in a work of neurotic art, that is to say a work of art which imposes an absolutely unreal convention on reality and which forces it into it. “

Previously, “great art” was the art of human excess, today kitsch is art

tailored to man “Seven Up. Kitsch is present in all of us, hence its irresistible rise. Because kitsch, before being an art, is above all an attitude linked to an idealized identity composition, a sort of second virtual staging of life.

The saturation of dead objects such is kitsch. Kitsch is the accumulation of heterogeneous identity signs, trinkets, gadgets, regulations, laws, junk food, antidepressants, desires forever unfulfilled that condemn us to obese consumption.

Suddenly towards the end of the last century, the color gray made its appearance in contemporary art. It was for a long time held in discredit by the theoreticians of the color: “Gray is neutral, fruitless and without expression”, a kind of aestheticism of boredom.

Gray is the color of acracry. Acracy as the inability of democracy to assume power and initiate strategies necessary for the major challenges of our development. The environment provides an eloquent example where everyone recognizes the gravity of the situation while proving unable to initiate the necessary corrective measures. Our democracies no longer project themselves into the future too absorbed in managing crises, crises caused by the negligence of these same governments which have governed in the past on a “small week” basis without promising projects for “tomorrow that sings” “.

According to painter Gerhard Richter, gray “is better than any other color at clarifying nothing. (Nothingness) There is in gray a notion of indifference which has the capacity to empty the surface of all meaning. It is the “color” of degeneration, of decreation. Gray cuts short any emotional outpouring and corresponds to indifference. Gray is considered to be the “color” of extinction. Extinction of animal and plant species, extinction of the humanist fire of the Enlightenment, extinction of the “last man”.

The aura of this new century is gray, colorless : a little white seeking to illuminate a very dark destiny. White, black, gray, it should be remembered, are non-colors.

Epilogue

Even if we are currently stuck in a gray quagmire where we are unable to choose, a sort of kitsch artistic “melting pot”, a day will come when we will have to choose because existence has not said its last word. We will have to choose between the white on white of Malevich (Eros) or the black on black of Rodchenko (Thanatos) between life and death, utopia or dystopia, democracy or acracry.

What to do with this gray if not to start all over again for so long, Mondrian has understood it well, that human nature will not have found its harmony. All form has an end thus, art will disappear as life

has more balance “then we will no longer need paintings or sculptures because we will live in the middle of the realized art.” (Mondrian)

So the Polish artist Opalka one day decided to paint the numbers from 1 to infinity on a black background while waiting for Mondrian’s wish to come true. With each new canvas, the background is sieved, diluted by 1% white, so are the numbers. The background of the canvases, from black to gray, moves towards white. This at the slow pace of the duration of an existence. Because to overturn this tragic world, shouldn’t the revealing act ennoble nothing as a whole ? But it will happen one day, for sure, that the background and the figures will unite in a dazzling white on white worthy of Malevich. Not an atomic white (light that kills) but a white which inscribes the metaphysical dimension of life.

“The 1 is an expanding whole”. It is this expanding time, this unique being that I exalt. Of course, as a man, I can fear death. But for my work, death means its culmination. I thought the end from the start. When I put the number “1”, the work was already there, already finished. I knew that only death could define the completion of my work. Time without death does not exist. It is an abstraction. Only the consciousness of death gives its reality to time. The dead, this bitch has become a collaborator, an instrument. I made a pact with her. She gave me the meaning of life, I gave her mine ”

The projected white is undoubtedly the most literal embodiment of the idea of eternity and infinity already contained in the number 1. Basically, does white on absolute white really exist? We’ll find out, you’ll find out soon.

1